



# Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture



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MODULE 8

## Livelihoods



**FAME**  
Fisheries,  
Aquaculture  
and Marine  
Ecosystems  
Division



**HRSD**  
Human Rights  
and Social  
Development



Pacific handbook for  
**gender equity and  
social inclusion**  
in coastal fisheries and aquaculture

Module 8:  
Livelihoods

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# CONTENTS

Key points .....	1
How to define livelihoods and when are livelihoods sustainable? .....	1
Why GSI is key to enhanced and sustainable livelihoods .....	7
The ability to improve or change a livelihood activity depends on several critical factors relevant to addressing GSI:.....	10
How livelihood interventions can boost women’s economic empowerment .....	14
Ways forward for improving gender equity and social inclusion in coastal livelihood projects .....	16
Checklist for GSI in livelihood enhancement planning.....	16
Additional resources and references .....	20



# Key points

- Livelihoods are the ways in which people make their living and support their lives, giving them a sense of meaning and purpose, and enabling them to contribute to social and cultural activities, as well as ensure regular and affordable food.
- Having diverse livelihood activities can often reduce people's vulnerability to the temporary or permanent loss of an asset on which a livelihood depends. Livelihoods are intrinsically related to the surrounding environment.
- Women, men, youth and other members of the community experience opportunities to engage in sustainable livelihoods in different ways due to cultural and social norms (i.e. beliefs about what women, men or youth can or cannot do) and their access to assets.
- The characteristics of people – their gender, age, ethnicity, personal history, education, reproductive capacity, disability and economic status – are all influential in livelihoods and can determine who has access to assets to begin with.
- Understanding gender and social inclusion (GSI) in coastal fisheries and aquaculture is key to the success of livelihood enhancements (alternative and/or supplementary) that aim to achieve fair distribution of benefits by reducing poverty, particularly for marginalised groups.

## What are livelihoods and when are they sustainable?

Women, men, youth and other members of communities living in the Pacific Islands region depend heavily on natural resources and other environmental services for their livelihoods. Coastal resource-based<sup>1</sup> livelihoods are vitally important to incomes and the broader well-being of individuals, households and communities, especially in rural and remote areas, and contribute substantially to national economies.

A **livelihood** is how we make our living and make sure our lives run well. This may include earning a better income or producing more or different foods. Coastal resource-based livelihoods provide a source of income, ensure food security, nutrition and health benefits, support cultural identity and practices, and help maintain social relations and connect people with their surrounding environment. Many households across the Pacific Islands consume fish or seafood weekly,<sup>2</sup> highlighting the reliance on fishing for food security and self-sufficiency, which also reduces their dependence on external (e.g. government-provided) support services.

A **sustainable livelihood** is one that that can continue. Livelihood initiatives are likely to be more sustainable if they build on the existing resources and skills that people have access to. But sustainability also has to address social, cultural or economic barriers to livelihoods that women, men, youth or marginalised people may experience in obtaining a livelihood.<sup>3</sup> Livelihoods must also fit with the needs and aspirations of individuals, including with changes in health or aging, and should put people at the centre of development.

1 Coastal resources include fisheries for vertebrates, invertebrates and marine algae; use of seagrasses, mangroves and coral reef habitats; and aquaculture.

2 Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey data from 10 Pacific Island countries and territories (2010–2016) as cited in SPC. 2019. Coastal Fisheries Report Card 2019. Noumea: SPC.

3 Govan H., Eriksson H., Batalofo M., Duarte A., Sukulu M., Lawless S., Tilley A. and van der Ploeg J. 2019. A new idea for coastal fisheries: Asking the right questions to enhance coastal livelihoods. Noumea, New Caledonia. [https://coastfish.spc.int/index.php?option=com\\_content&Itemid=30&id=509](https://coastfish.spc.int/index.php?option=com_content&Itemid=30&id=509)

A **successful livelihood** is one that can continue to provide benefits into the future, cope with and adapt to change, and not damage the things that make the livelihood possible. It is common to think that profitability in terms of cash is the main indicator of a successful livelihood. There are, however, a range of other factors that are also important to women, men and youth – and their communities – such as maintaining cultural practices and social relations, and sharing networks that different livelihood activities might rely on and support.

The misconception that profitability in terms of cash is the main indicator of a successful livelihood leads to stronger risks that women will be left out, not identified as a target group, or not consulted or engaged in livelihood development initiatives. This is because women tend to undertake fisheries activities primarily for subsistence purposes, often operate in informal set-ups, have less time to fish to generate greater profits, or target species that may not be considered of 'high commercial value'.

The livelihoods of coastal people in the Pacific Island region are diverse and are made up of multiple activities to achieve many different outcomes at different times. For example, the livelihood(s) that a rural man, woman or youth is engaged in at any time might vary. These activities are determined by the **assets** or **resources** people have available to them through ownership or access (Fig. 8.1). These assets or resources may change based on, for example, the season, economic changes (i.e. the price of a high-value seasonally available fish commodity), or opportunities that arise from time to time (e.g. local short-term paid work). Diversifying livelihoods often requires addressing the existing barriers that prevent women, men or youth from accessing assets to use in new livelihoods.

#### GENDER BLINDNESS OF LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVES

In the past, many coastal fisheries and aquaculture livelihood initiatives have been called 'gender blind'<sup>4</sup> (see Module 6: Community engagement) because they have not adequately taken into account the gender norms and relations that affect how women and men carry out their activities and earn their livelihoods. Gender is integral to the achievement of livelihood outcomes.<sup>5</sup>

4 Lawless S., Doyle K., Cohen P., Eriksson H., Schwarz A.M., Teioli H., Vavekaramui A., Wickham E., Masu R., Panda R. and McDougall C. 2017. Considering gender: Practical guidance for rural development initiatives in Solomon Islands. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish. Program Brief: 2017-22.

5 Okali C. 2011. Searching for new pathways towards achieving gender equity: Beyond Boserup and 'Women's roles in economic development'. ESA Working Paper No. 11-09; Agricultural Development Economics Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. [www.fao.org/economic/esa](http://www.fao.org/economic/esa). Accessed at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-am314e.pdf>



Whatever the situation, a livelihood activity builds and depends on the continued availability of a set of assets (Fig. 8.1) – not just natural resources, but also equipment, skill or knowledge, market availability, or finance. We sometimes refer to these assets or resources as ‘livelihood building blocks’.<sup>6,7</sup>

**Figure 8.1.** Resources or assets that people have available to them or that they could access to support their livelihoods.<sup>8</sup>

	<p><b>Natural resources</b> include lands, plants, freshwater sources, animals and minerals. In the sea this includes mangroves, sea grass, coral, fish, marine animals, sand and gravel, clean sea water, currents, etc. These resources are often closely connected. What happens on land can affect the sea; what happens to one animal or plant in the sea can affect other plants and animals and also people.</p>
	<p><b>Equipment</b> includes things like agricultural tools, fishing gear, buildings needed for processing, storage, or selling, transportation such as boats, trucks or planes, which depend on roads, wharves, or airfields. Other important equipment may include phone, radio, internet, water supply, sanitation, fuel such as firewood or diesel and electricity.</p>
	<p><b>People and skills*</b> required to implement and sustain a livelihood can sometimes be found within a community. Sometimes, new ideas will require learning new skills or knowledge. These ventures may be run by individual people, groups, families, tribes or the whole community, but in all cases, how other people support the idea and whether it is felt to be appropriate to the local culture will be very important.</p>
	<p><b>Markets</b> are more than just a place to sell something: markets are not only places where things are bought and sold (e.g. they may involve a market place, shops, passing ships, visitors or the internet), but also where services and information are traded (transport, rules and laws, taxes, prices or competition) or credit and loans arranged.</p>
	<p><b>Finances</b> may need to be considered for starting and running a new idea. Often, a good understanding of some key issues regarding money is essential. People should consider the costs to get started (such as equipment and training), as well as ongoing running costs the business has to pay regularly (wages, fuel, materials).</p>
	<p><b>Information</b> related to a livelihood idea, such as technical advice or training, start-up equipment, experiences and lessons learned, may need to be sourced from outside the village. Government or provincial government agencies can be a source of information and support, as can private businesses, NGOs, community and social groups.</p>

\*In Pacific island communities, support from families, friends, and other community members is a critical asset to help sustain livelihoods, especially when people do not have access to other resources or are in times of difficulty. Such support is also important for those with disability.

6 Govan et al. 2019. A new idea for coastal fisheries: asking the right questions to enhance coastal livelihoods. [https://coastfish.spc.int/index.php?option=com\\_content&Itemid=30&id=509](https://coastfish.spc.int/index.php?option=com_content&Itemid=30&id=509)

7 In other literature, these assets are often listed as natural capital, physical capital, human capital, financial capital and social and/or cultural capital.

8 Govan et al. 2019. A new idea for coastal fisheries: asking the right questions to enhance coastal livelihoods. [https://coastfish.spc.int/index.php?option=com\\_content&Itemid=30&id=509](https://coastfish.spc.int/index.php?option=com_content&Itemid=30&id=509)



### Box 1: A commonly cited definition of sustainable livelihoods

"A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living and the role that social and other institutions play. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the resource base." (Source: Scoones I. 1998. Sustainable rural livelihoods: A framework for analysis. IDS Working Paper 72, IDS, UK. Page 5).

**Diverse livelihood strategies** mean the portfolio of different activities or occupations undertaken by individuals, household members or community groups. These activities can involve women, men, youth or other members of a community and can vary by season(s), year(s) or other factors such as market demand.

Diversifying livelihoods (and diversifying the opportunities for different sectors of society or the community to be engaged in livelihoods) can happen naturally through people adapting their strategies as opportunities arise or as their needs change (e.g. the need to earn income quickly). Livelihood diversity functions like a form of 'insurance' or a 'safety net' so if one activity fails or is not available for some reason, people can rely on other activities to provide benefits. The ability to maintain diversity in livelihoods or further diversify them is often considered a key element in maintaining well-being, spreading risk and building resilience to shocks<sup>9</sup> (e.g. natural disasters, market changes, family illnesses).

In some situations, promotion of diverse livelihoods or having too many livelihood activities may create extra problems or burdens for women and men because they increase their domestic work load<sup>10</sup> (see the case study below on how gender norms and livelihood choices can overburden women in Solomon Islands).

**Livelihood enhancements or supplementary livelihoods** are implemented to increase access to income and food, or to improve natural resource management of marine species or habitats. Generally, these programmes aim to improve existing activities, including making them more profitable by strengthening or adding new components, (e.g. extending value-adding components). Or they may introduce new activities or options that are outside of existing or traditional fishing or gleaning livelihood activities.



#### TIP: Consider existing livelihood building blocks through a GSI lens

The resources that people have or that currently exist constitute livelihood building blocks. When considering supplementary or alternative livelihoods it is important to build on these existing resources (or assets). Looking at gender-differentiated use and means of access to these essential building blocks provides an entry point for a GSI lens. This is more likely to contribute to the long-term sustainability of livelihood initiatives. Refer to the key elements and definitions of GSI in Module 1, Introduction.

<sup>9</sup> FSPI. 2011. Supplementary livelihoods in the Pacific. Policy brief. Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International.

<sup>10</sup> Lawless S., Cohen P., McDougall C. et al. 2019. Gender norms and relations: implications for agency in coastal livelihoods. *Maritime Studies* 18, 347–358. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40152-019-00147-0>

Reviews of livelihood interventions in the Pacific Island region have found surprisingly few successful initiatives, underlining the challenges.<sup>11</sup> Issues and conditions raised as important for the success of interventions include:<sup>12</sup>

- conducting initial livelihood feasibility studies, baseline assessments and/or cost/benefit analyses;
- ensuring initial GSI information in assessment and design, including collection of sex-disaggregated data;
- considering sectors that might be socially excluded from participating in livelihood interventions;
- providing access to capital and financial resources for all community members;
- having certain social and governance factors in place, such as leadership and equity;
- ensuring that a livelihood intervention aligns with the cultural lifestyle of the community and supports aspirations (including those of women, men, youth and other members of the community);
- providing access to markets and good transport links for products;
- providing financial management training for appropriately identified women and men;
- ensuring continuous or regular government support and/or regular extension services;
- establishing links with empathetic business/private sector partners;
- having organisations that can perform the role of ‘honest broker’ between communities and commercial interests; and
- forming effective partnership and dialogue between government, civil society, the private sector and the community.

The case study below highlights the importance of value-chain assessments prior to commencing a livelihood initiative to make sure there is a market for any new product. Regular monitoring and evaluation are important to help identify and track negative impacts (see Module 3: Monitoring, evaluation and learning).

11 O’Garra, T. 2007. Supplementary livelihood options for Pacific Island communities: A review of experiences. Suva: FSPI. 35 pp.; Gillett R., Nash W., Govan H., Preston G. and Lam M. 2008. Livelihood diversification as a marine resource management tool in the Pacific Islands: Lessons learned. WorldFish Center and Secretariat of the Pacific Community. SPC Fisheries Newsletter, Number 125. 32–39. Govan H. 2011. How can we support communities to build on what they have for a better life? Supplementary livelihoods in the Pacific. FSPI Reports. Suva.

12 Note that such reviews have generally not taken a GSI approach.



## Case study: Developing opportunities for supplementary livelihoods through pearl shell supply and handicraft production in Fiji



A value-chain analysis of mother-of-pearl handicrafts found that the value of the imported pearl shell and pearl shell handicraft industry in Fiji was worth around USD 4 million in 2015. A project was developed to generate benefits for women's and youth groups through collecting juvenile black-lip oysters for pearl farms, and producing half 'mabe' pearls and pearl shell and mabe pearl handicrafts.

In 2015, a pearl oyster spat collection programme began with 12 Fijian communities, which are now able to generate income from the sale of black-lip pearl oysters to pearl farms. Half of the communities involved are women's and youth groups. Women's groups are also involved in mabe pearl farming and are now starting to generate some extra income and even to reinvest in assets or resources to support more farming in the future as the enterprise develops. The shells from pearl farming could be used for handicrafts and there appears to be potential for Fiji to supply locally produced shells to replace some imported pearl shell and pearl shell handicrafts.

Training for women was provided through women's groups with the aim of forming a micro-enterprise collective to introduce technology, training and workshop facilities. A small collective for selling handicrafts was established through one community, which also uses social media to sell products, and some women received basic business skills training.

This industry was considered likely to have potential for women due to the low cost of entry and development of appropriate technology, noting that women are often unable to obtain credit because they are less likely to have a credit history, or have less access to security assets such as land or starting capital. What we do not know yet is how compatible this new livelihood is with existing subsistence activities and community gender norms, or whether women may face negative impacts because they are earning extra income or being empowered by their participation.

(Southgate P., Kishore P., Sharma S. and Simos T. 2019. Empowering women through pearl industry-based livelihoods in Fiji. Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin, 29. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 24-29.)



# Why GSI is key to enhanced and sustainable livelihoods

Fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific contribute to livelihood outcomes in different ways for women and men, and people of different ages, social groupings, tribal affiliations, or migrant status.

Women and men often access and use resources in different ways, fish in different ways using different gear or methods, target different species, use different marine spaces, and participate differently in and along value chains (see below). For example, women use marine resources for food, for making handicrafts, for church and community functions, for customary exchange, or for income generation. They tend to be more involved in the processing and marketing of seafood. However, their participation in the various stages of the value chain is often not considered. Women's fishing activities are also often undervalued because they typically occur in the informal sector and are mostly 'part-time', 'unpaid', or concern a fishery that is generally regarded as having low commercial value (e.g. shellfish, which are an important source of protein for many Pacific households). This can result in 'gender blindness' (see Module 6: Community engagement).

Men are usually more involved in higher-value commercial fisheries such as fishing for pelagics and diving for lobsters and sea cucumbers, although in some places (e.g. Papua New Guinea and Fiji), women also take part in these types of fisheries. Men are often less involved with the post-harvest stages of the value chain. Furthermore, women (and often youth) carry out other activities that are vital to support livelihoods, such as subsistence farming or child care. Many of these hidden but essential activities are described as occurring 'underwater', like the submerged – and biggest part – of a floating coconut (Fig. 8.2).





Different social, economic, demographic and other characteristics all influence livelihood activities. These characteristics include gender, age, ethnicity, residence status, personal history, marital status, parenthood, reproductive capacity, sexual orientation, land and resource ownership, access and use rights, disability, and economic status. They affect how women, men, youth and other members of the community access, participate in and benefit from livelihood enhancement opportunities. They may also influence people's ability to access basic health, education and economic infrastructure and services. Finally, these differences affect how people make decisions about their livelihoods.

#### A GSI APPROACH TO LIVELIHOODS:

- is required to understand the different roles, needs, and other factors that contribute to social exclusion of women and men, youth and other members of the community;
- recognises that the existing differences between women and men can create inequalities and calls for actions to address them;
- aligns with a human rights-based approach that places people at the centre of development and creates an obligation on the state to provide an enabling environment to advance women's status;
- calls for equality of opportunity, access and results.



#### Did you know?

Research and applied experiences show that when designing and implementing livelihood interventions, neglecting gender-based inequalities and social exclusion, other cultural influences and/or socio-economic considerations can widen inequalities and even have unintended harmful consequences for women or for men.

#### PACIFIC VOICES ON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT 'GENDER' AND RELATED TERMINOLOGY

This handbook highlights many misconceptions regarding the concept of 'gender', the use of the word, and what people in the Pacific Island region associate with the term.

In a work situation, it is good practice to aim to use terminology that relates to the Pacific way of living, as highlighted in the quotes from Solomon Islands (below). This is important to improved understanding of gender concepts that explore the different roles and relationships of women and men within a specific context. *"Due to the common belief that 'gender' is only associated with women's development in Solomon Islands, some people may resist efforts to reduce gender inequalities because it is viewed as challenging customary practices and cultural beliefs, and others may believe it will undermine men's power and status."* (Elsie Wickham, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, pers. comm. 2017). Quoted from Lawless et al. (2017). Page 4.

A meaningful gender and development approach to livelihoods should be supported and promoted, in contrast to approaches that further reinforce misconceptions by focusing only on women or only on men. In certain circumstances, it might be appropriate to have a focus on only one group (see Box 2 on women's saving clubs), but this should be informed by a prior GSI analysis that assesses who might be impacted.

*"In a community where gender is mentioned, people automatically think of women; therefore, we often use the term 'inclusivity' meaning everyone."* (Duta Kauhiona, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, pers. comm. 2016.)

## The ability to improve or change a livelihood activity depends on several critical factors relevant to addressing GSI:

- Access to markets
- Tackling gender-based discriminatory practices
- Applying a human right-based approach to GSI
- Overcoming gender-based barriers and constraints
- GSI informed project design

### Access to markets

To reach markets, women vendors may have to pay additional costs for transport and travel long distances, which may not be well received by their community, family or husband/partner because of expectations that women will be around for household and childcare duties. Women may also find it harder to pay cash for transportation because they have less access to formal employment or other means of acquiring money (Box 2). Thus, if reaching markets is an issue for women, applying a GSI approach may mean engaging with the community to identify how they or community leaders can address the challenges (e.g. what action or measure will enable women to travel to markets?). Past approaches have included decentralising markets, reducing transport costs for women vendors, and educating men to undertake childcare duties. These approaches recognise the differences between women and men and amend existing conditions to promote equality of opportunity, market access and livelihood improvement.



### Case study: Overcoming barriers to accessing markets in Fiji

In Namuaimada in Ra, Fiji, women collect *nama* (seagrapes) for sale at the Suva Market. Their ability to benefit from their work was restricted by a lack of access to transport, time taken to travel the long distance to the central market and the cost of bus fares. To address these barriers, the women built an informal collective involving cooperation with bus drivers and local middle-sellers. The women collected seagrapes each morning from the reefs. The seagrapes were then processed, transported to the market by bus, and handed over to middle-sellers based on orders received. Payments were made to the bus driver who passed them on to the women in the village. (Source: Vunisea, A. 2019. <https://womeninfisheriesfiji.org/working-with-culture-to-achieve-womens-economic-empowerment/>)

### Tackling gender-based discriminatory practices

Women may face higher risks and be subjected to discriminatory practices when taking on new livelihood activities, in particular when entering a male-dominated field such as the shell-money trade in Solomon Islands.



## Case study: Gender norms in shell-money livelihoods in Solomon Islands and consequences of change

In Langalanga Lagoon in Malaita Province, Solomon Islands, the production and trading of shell money are an important livelihood activity and source of income and are strongly associated with Langalanga people's identity. Researchers have studied how gender influences the participation of women in the shell-money business (including jewellery production) and the distribution of income.

Gender roles in the shell-money value chain have changed since colonial times due to a range of factors. Men, women and youth take part in different stages or activities in the production of shell money and these differ from village to village. In recent decades, women have become more active in the manufacture and retail of shell money, travelling to markets on the main island for days or weeks – a role traditionally undertaken by men. In some places, men's fishing work has also changed and because they do not always earn enough income from fishing, they are participating more in shell-money production.

These changes in roles have created some social problems due to norms about what is acceptable women's work and behaviour, and control and expenditure of the income that women earn from shell money. Some women have retained the income to spend on food, education and other family needs rather than sharing it according to traditional custom under the wantok system. There has also been disapproval of women travelling for long periods of time (weeks) and subsequent discrimination. Barclay et al. (2019) found that: 'Some interviewees reported that women who travel for the shell-money trade have been accused of having sexual liaisons, which leads to conflict, including violence, within a household.'

These findings highlight the importance of understanding the different social characteristics of livelihood activities and whether an enhancement will result in positive livelihood outcomes or will foster economic or social inequality between families and communities.

(Source: Barclay K., McClean N., Foale S., Sulu R. and Lawless S. 2019. Lagoon livelihoods: Gender and shell money in Langalanga Lagoon. *Maritime Studies*, 17. 199–211.)

### Applying a human rights-based approach to GSI

Gender and social inclusion are core elements in the realisation of human rights. A human rights-based approach recognises that **all individuals are equal** and are entitled to their human rights without discrimination on any grounds, including sex, ethnicity, age, language, religion and disability. This approach also recognises that some groups in society are less likely to have a voice or be able to access the benefits of development.<sup>14</sup> Non-discrimination ensures that all people involved **have equal access** to a development process and its benefits, not just those who are easiest to reach or who have the most influence.

### Overcoming barriers and constraints

Livelihood interventions affect women and men differently. For example, a new technology may facilitate men's work; or a new livelihood activity may increase the workload of women. Therefore, attention must be paid to overcoming any barriers or constraints for women and men so they benefit equally from livelihood enhancements and avoid potentially negative impacts. A gendered livelihood assessment will show which activities women and men are involved in and the contribution of those activities to livelihoods. A time use survey tool (see Module 2: GSI analysis) can be used to identify time burdens for women and men.

14 Women's rights and gender equality (n.d.) <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/Pages/WomenAndGenderEquality.aspx>

## Case study: Gender norms, livelihood choices and overburdening for women in Solomon Islands

A study of coastal communities in two provinces of Solomon Islands investigated how gender norms and relations affect the livelihood choices available to men and women and their capacity to exercise their choices in coastal livelihoods (i.e. participate in and experience livelihood activities).

The study found that men were able to pursue a larger number of activities than women, who felt there were risks associated with pursuing some activities. There were also socially prescribed restraints on women's mobility (e.g. they were not allowed to travel). Livelihoods were more diverse than in the past, but women with more livelihood activities tended to have less time available to take up new opportunities. They also had a high work burden.

The researchers concluded that while diversified livelihoods can be beneficial for some people, providing a safety net to meet needs, in other cases diversification creates problems – such as increasing labour burdens. Therefore, gender differences and impacts must be carefully considered in livelihood enhancement initiatives.<sup>15</sup>

### GSI informed project design

Successful livelihood enhancement or supplementary projects, which have continued to generate income for people after they have been completed, feature good-quality **gendered livelihood feasibility assessments** and an inclusive **community engagement approach** (see Module 2: GSI analysis, and Module 6: Community engagement, and several tools and a checklist at the end of this module for assistance and guidance).

15 Lawless S., Cohen P., McDougall C. et al. 2019. Gender norms and relations: Implications for agency in coastal livelihoods. *Maritime Studies*, 18, 347–358. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40152-019-00147-0>



# How livelihood interventions can boost women’s economic empowerment

Women are key drivers of economic growth, significantly contributing to coastal resource-based livelihoods. They are more likely to be household financial managers and their expenditure patterns show more investment in assets that enhance the well-being of the family and greater community. However, their economic returns are not always cash-based due to the informal nature of their work. As a result, this work receives limited recognition, and data that is collected often fails to capture women’s contributions and investment; for example, data collection may miss out women-dominated fisheries and activities, such as gleaning and post-harvest activities along the value chain.

## What do we mean by economic empowerment?

“Women’s economic empowerment is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognise the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth.”<sup>16</sup>

## What are the issues for livelihoods?

“Gendered ‘structures of constraint’ can prevent women and girls accessing resources and translating those resources into improvements in their livelihood outcomes.”<sup>17</sup>

These constraints firstly relate to social norms of family and society, and secondly to formal mechanisms of the state, markets and civil society.<sup>18</sup> Table 8.1 below provides examples of how discriminatory practices and social norms affect women’s economic engagement.

**Table 8.1.** Examples of constraints on women’s engagement in the cash economy in Solomon Islands.<sup>19</sup>

Issues	Constraints
Access to markets	In many parts of the country that are far from provincial centres or the capital, Honiara, there are no opportunities for women to earn money by selling produce, fish or handicrafts.
Access to and control of collateral	Customary systems of traditional obligation and control of family assets make it difficult for women to independently access or control collateral. Customary land tenure systems and the complexities of land lease rights have generally excluded women from using land as a source of collateral or as a base for a business enterprise.
Access to credit	There are no legislative barriers to women accessing bank loans, mortgages, and other forms of financial credit, but de facto discrimination is commonly reported. This combined, with the barriers to obtaining collateral, constrain women’s ability to raise funds to invest in a business.
Access to financial services	Limited financial services are available to the 80% of Solomon Islanders who live in rural areas. This makes it difficult for women to secure their finances, save and borrow; it also means women cannot develop credit histories, which facilitate improving and growing businesses.  Women have difficulty accessing the services of financial institutions without formal identification (such as a birth certificate, driver’s license, or the endorsement of a designated authority), which many people do not have.
Control of income or profit	Systems of traditional obligation and high risks for women in violent relationships make it very difficult for them to control any income or profit they may make.
Violence against women	Violence against women is not only a major health concern, it also makes it difficult for women to retain money they have earned; to receive a share of a spouse’s money; or to assert their rights to travel, engage in their own work, and access education and training.

16 Eyben R., Kabeer N. and Cornwall A. 2008. Conceptualising empowerment and the implications for pro-poor growth. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. Page 9.

17 Kabeer N. 2018. Gender, livelihood capabilities and women’s empowerment: Reviewing evidence over the life course, GAGE, ODI, UK. Page i.

18 Kabeer N. 2018. Gender, livelihood capabilities and women’s empowerment: Reviewing evidence over the life course.

19 Sourced from Laqeretabua A. 2019. Gender and fisheries desktop review for SPC. SALT Inc. Development Consultants. Page 54.

## Box 2: Savings clubs and financial inclusion training empower women

Women's savings groups and financial inclusion training have been in existence in some Pacific Island countries, including Solomon Islands, Fiji and Papua New Guinea, for more than a decade. A pioneer in this area is Dr Alice Pollard, who started a financial inclusion model in Solomon Islands with the West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association in 2006 to empower women in rural communities as a means of supporting livelihood enhancement and gender equality.

The broad aim of these initiatives is to provide opportunities for women to save and invest money, and use it in their livelihoods when other financial services (e.g. from banks) are not available. The women-only models assist women with low literacy to develop financial and other skills that will be helpful and empowering in other aspects of their lives. The approach also provides women with leadership opportunities that might not be available to them if men were involved.

In another programme, the Solomon Islands women's savings club model, 'Tugeda Tude fo Tumoro', provides an opportunity for women to mobilise financial resources to invest in initiatives. In doing so, they gain confidence in decision-making, financial management, budgeting and record keeping.

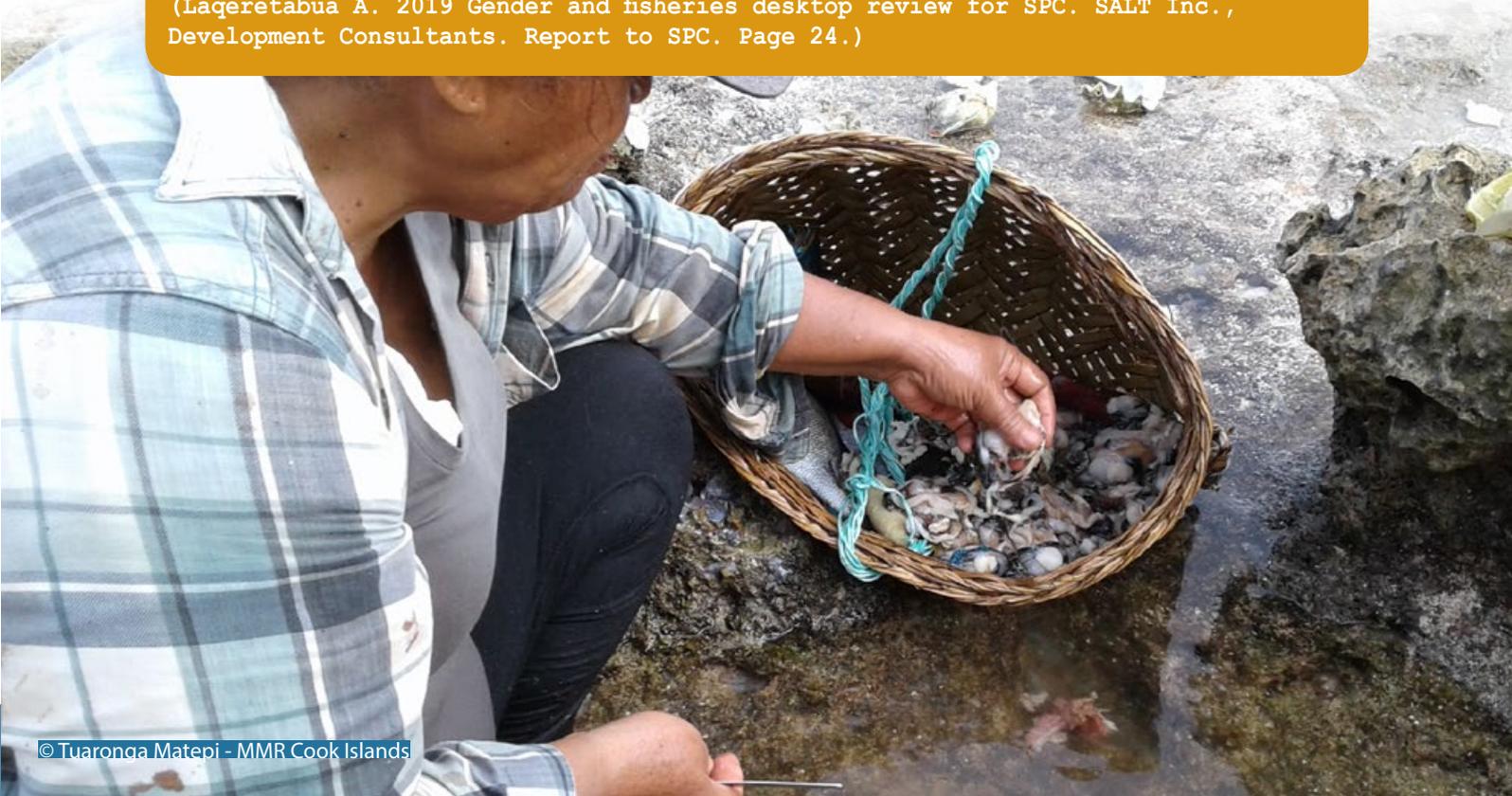
Improving women's confidence, capacity and standing erodes barriers to their participation in decision-making and enhances their contribution to their community.

### Case study: Discrimination in fishing



'In Palau, women are discriminated against by the exclusion of their fisheries catch in the cooperatives set up to provide shore-side facilities and services to local fishers because of the low value and irregular supplies involved with many invertebrate products. This leads to little or no access for women and their produce to cold storage and transportation facilities provided by the Palau Federation of Fishing Associations, hindering women from accessing markets that are further away or forcing them to pay extra fuel to use boat transportation for their products.'

(Lageretabua A. 2019 Gender and fisheries desktop review for SPC. SALT Inc., Development Consultants. Report to SPC. Page 24.)



# Ways forward for improving gender equity and social inclusion in coastal livelihood projects

This section provides key principles, a checklist and three tools to support the integration of GSI in coastal livelihood projects.

## Key principles

Any assessment or tool used in supporting sustainable livelihood initiatives in the Pacific should apply the following key principles to guide action towards the development of sustainable livelihoods that incorporate a GSI perspective:

- Be people-centered – focus on the impacts an action will have on the livelihoods of different people (rather than the institutions, natural resources or technology).
- Build on strengths – action should seek to build on people’s own capabilities, skills, knowledge and needs, acknowledging that these are influenced by gender norms.
- Give voice and choice – action should seek to increase people’s capacity, including of those who are marginalised or vulnerable, and provide them with opportunities to give voice to their choices and make informed choices.
- Be flexible – actions should be responsive and adaptable to changes in circumstances and operations (e.g. business arrangements).
- Focus on sustainability – action should take account of the economic, social, institutional and environmental sustainability of livelihoods.<sup>20</sup>

## Checklist for GSI in livelihood enhancement planning

This checklist focuses first on ensuring planners, practitioners and facilitators consider the range of stakeholders (*people*) who might be involved in or affected by a livelihood activity, and then the sorts of issues that might come into play (*involvement*) and affect their ability to respond to, participate in or benefit from a livelihood enhancement activity.

Organisations and programme staff are encouraged to carry out a detailed GSI analysis prior to planning and implementation if possible. Whether a GSI analysis or this checklist is used, it is important to carry out a GSI assessment before, during and after the livelihood intervention:

1. Prior – The process should identify ways to ensure equitable participation of women, men and youth in the diagnosis process, which will allow an opportunity to capture a more balanced range of voices that may reflect gender and social differences (i.e. interests, responsibilities, etc.). Specifically, this analysis should focus on who is involved in the diagnosis process, and how is the process conducted.
2. Post diagnosis (planning and implementation) – Information collected as part of GSI analysis is important for planning and monitoring the implementation of a livelihood enhancement initiative to see how or why livelihoods have changed or improved, or who has been affected (see Module 3: Monitoring, evaluation and learning).



### TIP

**Different forms of social differentiation or characteristics of people – their gender, age, ethnicity, personal history, parenthood, reproductive capacity, disability and economic status – are all influential in livelihoods.**

20 Source: Adapted from IMM Ltd. 2008. Sustainable livelihoods enhancement and diversification (SLED): A manual for practitioners. IUCN. Page 15.

## A - People: Have you considered the following people and whether their roles are different in any way?

- Women and men
- Girls and boys
- Married and unmarried women and men, or widows/widowers
- Different age groups, the elderly or young women/men
- People living with disabilities (physical or mental)
- People with different traditional roles within the community (e.g. fishers, custom roles, carpenters, weavers, artists)
- People from different tribes or clans
- People from different communities or villages
- Migrants – seasonal or permanent (e.g. people who are not here now, but sometimes are)

## B - Involvement: Have you considered how these different people may be affected by the following issues?

### 1. Rights to access or use land, sea or natural resources

### 2. Rights to make decisions or control use of land or sea or resources

- These may be inherited through a mother's or father's family line or by descent; traditionally sanctioned; or allowed by formal legal mechanisms.
- If the livelihood depends on access or rights of use, will the stakeholder have authority or rights in theory AND in practice? Even in matrilineal situations, men may have assumed the role of decision-makers.

### 3. Traditionally defined roles or relationships with natural resources

- By tribe, clan or gender or other criteria, e.g. restrictions on fishing activities; taboo on the targeting or consumption of certain species or accessing sacred areas.

### 4. Roles in raising children

- Feeding and caring for children of different ages, teaching young or older children, training in fishing or hunting.

### 5. Users who depend on the area or resources but do not have traditional rights, such as temporary or seasonal migrants, or immigrants

### 6. Age and disability

- How are youth, the elderly or those living with a disability involved? Are assumptions being made by adults that, for instance, youth will participate in a given way (e.g. provide labour, implement, enforce or comply). Are elders' knowledge and role being considered?

### 7. Economic or other social impacts of an activity?

- Will an activity have a negative impact on any group, or make them more vulnerable in meeting their livelihood needs through their participation in the livelihood? Will it create hardship or disputes (e.g. jealousy, conflict, inequality)?

### 8. Access to agencies or supporting organisations

- Will all people have access to agencies that could provide services to help them in their livelihoods (e.g. access to finance or information)?<sup>21</sup>

21 Source: Adapted from IMM Ltd. 2008, Sustainable livelihoods enhancement and diversification (SLED): A manual for practitioners. IUCN. Page 15.

## C - Based on the above, can you answer these key GSI questions?

1. **Who will or can participate in a livelihood enhancement or supplementary activity in terms of different social groups (e.g. men, women, youth, women's groups, individuals, community, family business)?**
2. **Who has access to assets (e.g. social and institutional support, information, physical and natural resources, finance, etc.)?**
3. **What is the division of labour or roles and responsibilities, and allocation of time?**
4. **Who has the power to make decisions?**
5. **Who will get the benefits and who will be impacted (e.g. access and control of income and services)?**

## Tools for assessing integration of GSI in livelihood initiatives

There are many different tools and resources available for livelihood assessment and enhancement, though far fewer relate specifically to GSI and livelihoods. We have selected three tools that are most relevant to livelihoods in the region.

- 'New Idea' for livelihoods tool
- Gendered value-chain analysis tool
- GSI analysis tool

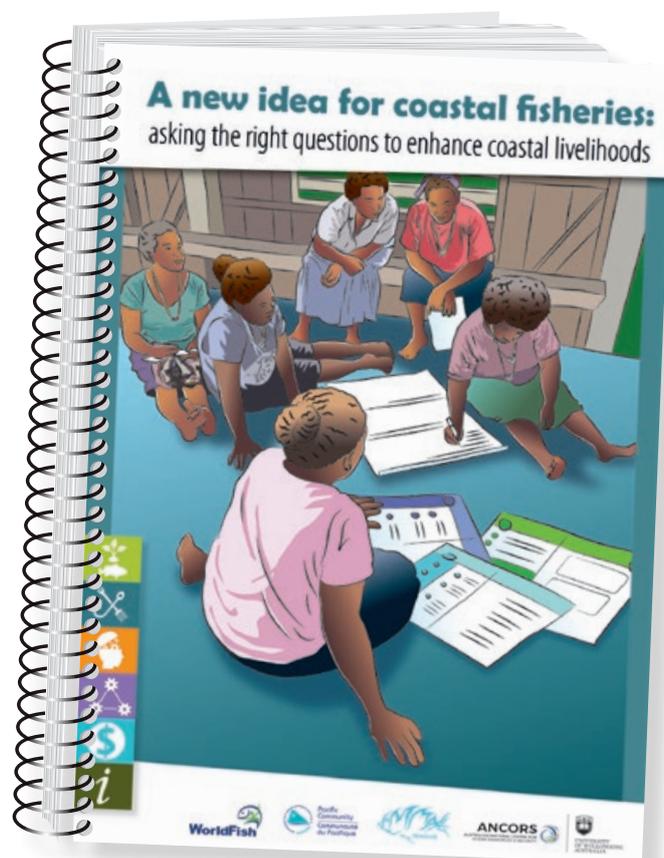
### 'New Idea' for livelihoods tool

A common question facing community members, extension officers, community organisers and organisations considering livelihood options is: "Is this a good idea?"

A tool was developed with specific emphasis on considering the roles of women and men in livelihood projects. This 'New Idea' tool, recently published by SPC,<sup>22</sup> is for guiding conversations about a group wanting to take up a new livelihood activity. It provides a structured process and guiding questions to assess the viability of a proposed activity based on five broad components or building blocks: natural resources, equipment, skills, markets and finances.

The 'New Idea' is designed to be widely and locally accessible. However, while gender considerations have been integrated in the 'New Idea' tool, it was not designed to challenge gender inequalities.

- If the 'New Idea' is used by organisations or programme staff, a GSI analysis should ideally be undertaken before planning and implementation or, at the least, the checklist should be applied.
- The 'New Idea' can be an empowering tool if used by the target groups in a participatory learning approach.



22 Available at [https://coastfish.spc.int/index.php?option=com\\_content&Itemid=30&id=509](https://coastfish.spc.int/index.php?option=com_content&Itemid=30&id=509)

## Gendered value-chain analysis and how to support livelihoods

A value chain (Fig. 8.3.) is the full range of production activities that all people are involved in when a product passes through different stages and gains value. This includes access to productive resources (e.g. equipment, finance) prior to harvesting, collection or harvesting, processing and transportation of the product, and sale to a wholesaler or exporter, or a final consumer (at a market, shop or restaurant). Value chains include local, regional and global markets.



**Figure 8.3.** A simple value chain showing the different stages for a marine product.

In general, we find that how women and men participate in the value chain as part of their livelihood activities very much depends on the existing division of labour, and the social norms governing work considered appropriate for women and for men in a location.<sup>23</sup> These roles can also be influenced by other factors such as age, marital status, ethnicity and economic status, which are sometimes identified as gender-based constraints in the value chain.

It is important to recognise the activities women perform in value chains, whether their work is paid or unpaid, part time or full time, and the specific barriers and needs of women. Women’s participation along the value chain can include their access to and control over productive assets and the benefits derived from them (e.g.income). This is often influenced by an individual’s ability to make decisions or choices and to transform these choices into desired livelihood outcomes – such as food or income, payment of school fees, improved housing and other forms of material well-being. But this requires the ability to control access to resources and profits.

A gender-sensitive value-chain analysis (or mapping) identifies all value-chain actors (women and men, youth) and their level of involvement in each stage, their relationships with each other, the gender-based constraints (GBC) faced by women and men in performing their tasks (see table below) including inequalities in access to and control over resources, or in decision-making about certain activities in the value chain. Identifying GBC is a key step that complements a simple value-chain analysis by adding a gender lens.

The information collected on the various actors, their relationships and the GBC they face along value-chain nodes need to be gender-disaggregated using gender indicators or measures (see table tool below). This helps identify gender-specific barriers and underlying forms of discrimination that relate to existing gender norms. For example, women and men experience access to markets differently because of their gender roles.<sup>24</sup> Women’s mobility may be more restricted because they are expected to stay home and look after children and manage households; they may not own or have access to a means of transportation; or travelling might not be safe for them.

Tool for analysis of gender-based constraints in the value chain. (Adapted from FAO. 2018. Developing gender-sensitive value chains – Guidelines for practitioners. Rome: FAO.)

Activity per stage	Constraints faced by women	Causes/factors leading to GBC	Consequences on the value chain	Actions to address GBC
Preparation				
Harvesting				
Processing				
Wholesale				
Retail				

Analysis also identifies where improvements in the quality of the product could help producers or sellers to gain higher value. Often in rural or remote places, there are issues with spoilage of seafood or lack of means to store it long enough. If we investigate the economic roles of people along the value chain, it is possible to identify entry points for interventions to improve the value (the amount of money) a person gets for their product. Interventions could include livelihood enhancement activities to reduce post-harvest loss (to avoid seafood spoilage), improve access to credit (to avoid money lenders with high interest rates and increase access to markets (and to good facilities, freezers, ice, etc.), or establishment of women’s cooperatives to help sellers access information to better understand market and trade prices.

23 Kruijssen F., McDougall C. and Asseldonk I.J.M. 2018. Gender and aquaculture value chains: A review of key issues and implications for research. *Aquaculture*, 493:328-337. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0044848617325577#bb0305>

24 FAO. 2018. Developing gender-sensitive value chains – Guidelines for practitioners. Rome: FAO. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6462e.pdf>

## GSI analysis tool

A GSI analysis tool and information are provided in Module 2 of this handbook. A GSI analysis helps to identify and assess:

- the roles of women and men in coastal fisheries and aquaculture livelihoods;
- the different ways they use, access or control (i.e. make decisions) resources;
- the impact of their activities;
- how they benefit;
- what environment, economic, social or cultural laws, and normal policies, processes or trends affect how people achieve benefits; and
- the distinct needs of women and men, given their current roles.

Information collected as part of GSI analysis is important for monitoring and evaluation (see Module 3) of a livelihood enhancement initiative to see how or why livelihoods have changed or improved.

Where this is not possible, the **checklist** should be used before and after the intervention to ensure GSI issues are considered and acted on.

This module contributes to the outcomes of *A new song for coastal fisheries* and the *Small-scale fisheries guidelines (SSF)*

- SSF 6 – Social development, employment and decent work
- SSF 7 – Value chains, post-harvest and trade
- SSF 8 – Gender equality
- SSF 12 – Capacity development
- *A new song* Outcome 1 – Informed, empowered coastal communities with clearly defined user rights
- *A new song* Outcome 6 – Effective collaboration and coordination among key stakeholders and sectors of influence
- *A new song* Outcome 7 – More equitable access to benefits and decision-making within communities, including women, youth and marginalised groups
- *A new song* Outcome 8 – Diverse livelihoods reducing pressure on fisheries resources, enhancing community incomes, and contributing to improved fisheries management

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