

New opportunities to mainstream gender into regional tertiary educational programmes

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Background

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is one of four key regional partners currently implementing the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme. USP's responsibility within PEUMP is to build capacity through education, training, research and development for key stakeholder groups involved in fisheries and marine resource management. The education component encompasses the review, revision and development of tertiary-level qualifications, and provides support to postgraduate students. In addition, technical vocational education and training, and continuing professional development, provide opportunities to address existing and emerging issues in the Pacific.

The three main principles on which the overall approach of the PEUMP programme is based, include sound ocean and coastal governance, with a focus on biodiversity protection and sustainable use of marine resources; mainstreaming human rights and gender equality through a rights-based approach; and mainstreaming climate change and the environment in the context of biodiversity. Supported by

recommendations from USP's Institute of Marine Resources (IMR 2019), opportunities arose for integrating gender equality into USP programmes. Initially, the entry point for mainstreaming gender equality was through the courses of USP's Marine Studies programme. However, as time passed, another opportunity came about through USP's postgraduate diploma in Gender Studies. USP staff have received training on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, and Human Rights Based Approach to build in-house capacity to identify and apply gender socialisation. Following this training, and discussions with the USP Gender Studies programme coordinator, a Gender and Environment course was developed.

Gender and Environment course

Discussions with regional experts and existing initiatives on the subject of gender and the environment have strongly influenced and shaped this course. In alignment with PEUMP's key principles, the Gender and Environment course provides a forum to critically examine and understand how gender plays out in environmental issues, particularly focusing on the Pacific Islands region. The course explores how the environment shapes gender roles, norms and relationships, and how these in turn affect the use, management and conservation of resources, as well as social responses to climate change. The course also highlights gender inequalities and issues of women's empowerment, examines ecofeminist theory, and looks at the relationship between gender justice and environmental justice. Students who take the course are taught how to apply a gender lens when analysing environmental issues in the region.

The first part of the Gender and Environment course covers feminist theories, and notions and debates that inform the subfield of gender and environment. The second part explores gender-related issues with regards to specific environmental areas and concerns. Although particular attention is paid to the context of fisheries and aquaculture, consideration is also given to the gendered dimensions of issues within other areas such as agriculture, forestry, biodiversity and climate change.

The Gender and Environment courses require students to use a handbook (Barclay et al. 2021) developed by the Pacific Community (SPC). The handbook provides case studies and gender analyses specific to fisheries and aquaculture for students and practitioners. The

“ The Gender and the Environment post graduate course supports PEUMP's objective to enable gender mainstreaming as well as USP's own vision to integrate gender and more broadly social inclusion and human rights-based approaches into their courses.

I am confident that this course will support environmental science students to look through their work from a gender lens. **”**

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About USP-PEUMP
<https://www.usp.ac.fj/institute-of-marine-resources/pacific-european-union-marine-partnership-programme-peump/>

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upcoming edition of the Pacific handbook – which will address human rights, gender equity and social inclusion in tuna industries – will add to the pool of resource materials used in this course. It is anticipated that professionals who take this course will apply what they learn to research, policy-making and development practices that take into account the interplay between gender inequality and environmental exploitation.

Future plans include offering the Gender and Environment course as an elective in other disciplines, thereby providing a pathway to integrated studies. The course will also be modified to have a fisheries focus and be delivered as a Gender and Fisheries micro qualification by the end of 2024.

Diploma in Fisheries Investigation and Prosecution

This programme has recently been developed in conjunction with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, based in Solomon Islands, and is ready for delivery following endorsement by the University Council in May 2022. The overall goal of the Fisheries Investigation and Prosecution programme is to cover the key fisheries compliance and enforcement skills and competencies required for both investigation and prosecution of fisheries-related offences. The programme will address the need for advanced fisheries monitoring, compliance and surveillance skills and competencies through the enforcement process. This programme encompasses the key fisheries skills and competencies of monitoring, compliance, surveillance and enforcement that are required for both investigation (understanding legislation, legal power, evidence identification and management) and prosecution (evidence analysis, transition from investigation, case file preparation and prosecution delivery) skills. It is designed for fisheries officers or other authorised persons in a designated investigative and regulatory role, thus enabling a successful prosecution for fisheries offences.

Having qualified fisheries officers prepare fisheries criminal case files would lessen the burden for public prosecutors, and address non-compliance issues. Gender equality issues are applied in appropriate sections of the course. It is anticipated that this programme will be offered in 2023.

Certificate IV in Pacific Ocean Finance

The Certificate IV in Pacific Ocean Finance is a new programme that is being developed to improve the collective regional understanding of ocean finance and its challenges, and identifies which ocean finance solutions are best suited for the Pacific. It is aimed at those who may already be working in ocean management and finance-related activities, those with relevant work experience who wish to pursue a career in ocean finance, and governance-related work, or those who fulfil the entry requirements for a certificate programme at USP's Pacific Technical And Further Education unit.

The programme will raise awareness of those associated with the financial sector on how social and environmental factors can influence their investment decisions and affect investment returns. It is also intended for those working in the areas of marine studies, fisheries, conservation, and tourism to better understand financial concepts and how they work to fulfil

their objectives and roles. The programme outlines policy pathways to direct capital and grants towards ocean activities that support sustainable development goals. In general, it equips policy-makers, managers and those interested in ocean-related activities with the tools and techniques they need to positively change people's mindsets about improving ocean health and creating long term economic and social sustainability. Gender equality aspects are embedded in case studies that form part of the assessments. As with the Diploma, this Certificate will be offered in 2023.

Micro qualifications

Two regional micro qualifications, with the aim of improving the capacities of fisheries practitioners and trainers in the region, work towards sustainability for food and livelihood security in a changing climate context, while also ensuring that gender equality is being developed. These micro qualifications are titled "Scale-up Community-based Fisheries Management in the Pacific" and "Analyse the Agricultural and Fisheries Value Chains in the Pacific Islands". Graduates will advance their career pathways in their various professions in national or regional fisheries agencies, non-governmental and civil society organisations, small and medium scale agricultural and fisheries entrepreneurship, quality assurance, domestic and international trade, and agribusiness research.

Future plans

PEUMP will continue to strengthen the capacity of the Pacific Islands region by supporting more professionals with tuition fees for relevant TVET programmes, micro qualifications, non-formal training and professional short courses. There is a need for more Pacific-relevant micro qualifications to better equip local communities with the knowledge and skills they need to take ownership of and manage their coastal resources more sustainably. It is also a practical option for fisheries professionals who work full time to undertake specific technical upskilling through shorter and more targeted micro qualifications that are flexible and can be taken at one's own pace.

References

- Barclay K., Leduc B., Mangubhai S. and Donato-Hunt C. (eds). 2021. Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture. Second edition. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 80 p.
- IMR (Institute of Marine Resources). 2019. Training and education for living marine resource management needs assessment and gaps analysis. University of the South Pacific. 50 p.