



**28** Years in Support of  
Small-scale Fishworkers

# Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

## From the Editor

The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines, hereafter referred to as the Guidelines) are expected to be finalized in the upcoming Committee on Fisheries (COFI) meeting in June 2014 in Rome. Currently under discussion, these guidelines represent a step towards the formal recognition both of women's contributions to the small-scale fisheries as well as of some of the major issues of life and livelihood that they face. However, while the inclusion of gender concerns—the result of sustained lobbying by a large number of civil society organizations—is certainly a laudable outcome, the final document may be something of a mixed bag for women in the sector.

The Guidelines recognise women's critical contributions to pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest activities in the freshwater and marine small-scale fisheries, including shellfish and seaweed. They further recognise that gender equity and equality are fundamental to the development process and so also equal rights and opportunities for women. Calling for the promotion of women's leadership, the Guidelines invoke the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in calling for the elimination of gender-prejudicial customary practices. Gender-sensitive policy making, women's participation in fisheries organizations and equal access to extension services and technical training are among some of its further recommendations.

However, there are several fundamental problems with the Guidelines with respect to women. Not only are the Guidelines voluntary and non-binding in nature, they also do not cover aquaculture, the fastest-growing among the animal food producing sectors and one that employs or engages vast numbers of women. Apart from these inherent infirmities, the Guidelines further also trivialise the systemic and structural nature of the multiple problems that women in the sector face, including economic, social and political marginalization, first by reducing these, in its chapter on Gender Equality, to a matter to roles and relationships among men and women, and next, by erasing the specificity of women's issues altogether with the claim that women are only "often more disadvantaged than men". Having so framed the problem, it is hardly surprising that the solutions the Guidelines offer are all in the realm of "empowering women".

Beyond perhaps presenting a window of opportunity for certain sections within the small-scale fisheries, how effectively might the Guidelines help women challenge, in any meaningful manner, the gender status quo in the sector would therefore be a moot question. The real transformation of gender inequities and the discrimination experienced by women in fisheries will only be possible if the stated human rights basis of the Guidelines is given effect through specific measures in an Implementation Plan aimed at tackling the systemic basis of such inequities at household, community and in public life. ❏



Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary, ICSF and Publisher, Yemaya, was on board the Malaysian Airlines MH370 that disappeared on 8 March 2014 en route to Beijing, China from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Chandrika was on her way to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to attend the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, representing ICSF. The location of the aircraft is, to date, not known. Chandrika is very much missed by all of us. Along with anxious friends and members of her family, we still remain in hope for her safe return.

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# Through the gender lens

## A gender analysis of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication

By **Cornelie Quist**  
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The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the Guidelines), which were discussed in a meeting in Rome in February 2014, make a serious attempt to include the role of women in small-scale fisheries, address issues of importance for women's lives and livelihoods and attempt to ensure gender-sensitive policies and measures. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) played a significant role in this, highlighting during a series of regional consultations, the importance both of recognizing women's role in the fisheries and fishing communities and of respecting women's human rights and dignity in society. The CSOs also attended the technical consultations on the Guidelines where the text was negotiated. Further, they lobbied governments to adopt text proposals that defended the interests of small-scale fishing communities, including proposals on gender issues.

A major strength of the Guidelines, on which ongoing discussions are taking place under the aegis of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is that it refers to all actors and all activities in small-scale fisheries—pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest, both commercial and subsistence—and include the role of women. The Guidelines also emphasize the community and intersectoral

dimensions of small-scale fisheries and recognize the interdependency of activities in the community.

The Preface of the Guidelines says: “Small-scale fisheries employ 90 percent of the world's capture fishers and fish workers, about half of whom are women...Many small-scale fishers and fish workers are self-employed and engaged in directly providing food for their household and communities as well as working in commercial fishing, processing and marketing. Fishing and related activities often underpin the local economies in coastal, lakeshore and riparian communities and constitute an engine, generating multiplier effects in other sectors.”

The text of the Guidelines makes a serious attempt to be inclusive and in many sections we see the phrases “both men and women” or “including women” with specific attention to marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Part I of the document deals with the objectives, scope and guiding principles of the Guidelines. In Chapter 1 (Objectives), there is no specific reference to gender or women in any of the objectives of the Guidelines. However, a special section in the end says “these objectives should be achieved through the promotion of a human rights-based approach, by empowering small-scale fishing communities, *including both men and women*, to participate in decision-making processes, and assume responsibilities for sustainable use of fishery resources....” (Italics added)

The Guidelines take into account a wide range of important considerations and principles described in Chapter 3 (Guiding Principles). These include the recognition of dignity and human rights of all individuals, equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, transparency and accountability, holistic and integrated approaches and social and environmental responsibility. The Guiding Principles have two specific references to gender and women's rights. The most significant is the fourth guiding principle according to which “Gender equity and equality is fundamental to any development. Recognizing the vital role of women in small-scale fisheries, equal rights and opportunities should be promoted.” In addition, the second guiding principle concerning “Respect of cultures” gives special attention to “encouraging women's leadership” with specific reference to Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which advocates, among other

CORNELIE QUIST




Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary, ICSF, at the Technical Consultation on SSF Guidelines that addressed issues of importance for women's lives and livelihoods

things, the elimination of prejudicial gender-based customary practices.

Part II of the Guidelines deals with key issues of importance for Responsible fisheries and sustainable development. It is significant that this part of the document has a full chapter—Chapter 8—on Gender Equality. The text of this chapter has references to strategies such as gender mainstreaming and establishing policies and legislation to challenge discrimination against women and realize gender equality in small-scale fisheries development. From a gender perspective it is of particular importance that the text says: “States should endeavour to secure women’s equal participation in decision making for policies directed towards small-scale fisheries.” Specific attention is paid towards encouraging women’s participation in fisheries organizations. The text adds further that “States should adopt specific measures to address discrimination against women, while creating spaces for CSOs, in particular for women fish workers and their

organizations, to participate in the monitoring of their implementation.” The chapter also includes references to women’s equal access to extension services and technical access, including legal support and the development of “better technologies of importance and appropriate to women in small-scale fisheries.”

Besides the chapter on Gender Equality, there are some other useful references specifically to women’s work and rights in Part II of the Guidelines on key issues for “Responsible fisheries and sustainable development”. These are about women and tenure, participation in fisheries management, social development, employment and decent work, and women’s role in the post-harvest chain. However these references are not very explicit. The most explicit reference from a gender perspective is the one which deals violence and where the text in Chapter 6 says: “All parties should take steps to institute measures that aim to eliminate violence and to protect women exposed to such violence in small-scale fishing communities. States



**R**amida Sarasit, 48, is the president of the Southern Women Fisheries Association and Secretary for the alternative livelihood group of Libong Island, the largest island in Thailand's Trang province. With its picturesque red-brown beaches and ubiquitous rubber trees, Libong Island is home to a small Muslim fishing community whose mainstay besides fishing is rubber farming. The island once had healthy mangroves along its coast but due to human activity, the mangroves that once served as natural barriers to large waves and intense winds are today in a depleted state. The impact of mangrove loss

Ramida's involvement in rehabilitation and restoration activities engaged her in a process of community involvement that has grown only stronger with time.

Ramida is deeply committed to increasing the participation of women in the community life of Libong Island. Over the years, the Southern Women Fisheries Association as well as the other women's groups she is associated with have been involved in various community works such as building check dams, mangrove rehabilitation, the pursuit of alternative livelihood and agro-forestry. Ramida's priority is to facilitate the formation of a forum for women-in-fisheries communities that will, she hopes, encourage their greater participation in the fisheries, take up the issue of food security and work towards the wellbeing of community members.

However, according to Ramida, the greatest problem that the women face is the lack of access to public policy making. The government has failed to involve the people in marine and coastal resources management, which is marked by the absence of women from coastal communities at the local planning level, a disregard for their knowledge and skills as well as a rejection of their rights over natural resources.

Clearly, a hard battle lies ahead for Ramida and the women of Libong Island. ❖

## PROFILE

### Taking the lead—Ramida Sarasit

Following the tsunami, a fisherwoman becomes a community leader actively involved in rehabilitation and restoration activities

By **Kesineek Kwanjaroen** (kasineek@gmail.com) of Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), Thailand

was felt mostly acutely in 2004 when the island was ravaged by the Indian Ocean tsunami which killed many and destroyed vast amounts of property.

Born and raised in Libong Island, Ramida, like many other women of the island, was once a fisherwoman. Her talent for leadership however manifested itself in the aftermath of the tsunami, when the devastated community faced the difficult task of rebuilding itself.

should ensure access to justice for victims of violence, abuse etc, *including within the household and the community*" (Italics added). In the rest of the text of this part there are no specific references to women or gender and therefore it remains to be seen how the text is interpreted and if this is done from a gender perspective.

Part III of the document deals with guidelines for "Ensuring an enabling environment and supporting implementation." In this part Chapter 10 and 11 have some important references to *gender-sensitive policies* and *the production of gender-disaggregated data, designing of gender-sensitive interventions* and *gender-sensitive indicators* for monitoring purposes.

In Chapter 12 (Capacity Development), there is an important reference to enabling "women to organize autonomously at various levels on issues of particular relevance to them." Also there is attention to "the equitable participation of women in representative structures in small-scale fisheries subsector along the entire value chain."

Finally in Chapter 13, Implementation support and Monitoring, the text says that States and other parties should secure "the effective dissemination of information on gender and women's role in small-scale fisheries and to highlight steps that need to be taken to improve women's status and their work."

What are the gender-based implications of the clauses and references described above? While having a specific chapter on Gender

Equality could be considered as a major strength of the Guidelines, it could also be seen as a weakness. From a gender perspective, the Guidelines would have been much stronger had gender been integrated as a cross-cutting issue. This was also what CSOs had aimed for. However, the majority of governments felt that gender should be referred to in a separate chapter. And so, while this was done, several references to gender or women in the draft text were deleted or watered down, including proposals from CSOs. Thus, the chapter on Disaster Risks and Climate Change (Chapter 9) has no reference to gender anymore, despite all the evidence that natural and human-made disasters have a differential impact on women and men. Furthermore, the text of the Guidelines gives the impression that the terms "gender" and "women" are synonymous. The slogan "Stop fixing women, start fixing the context" is also applicable here.

The Guidelines aim to promote a human rights-based approach. A human rights-based approach to small-scale fisheries development needs a transformative outlook aimed at ending social injustice and inequality. However since little attention is paid to social analysis in the document, it is difficult to imagine how the Guidelines will ensure the implementation of such an approach. Nowhere in the document, not even in the chapter on Gender Equality (Chapter 8), are gender issues in small-scale fisheries actually defined and nor is it explained what the impact of unequal power relations between men and women could be for a sustainable development of



## Milestones

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### Milestone agreement at UN gender equality talks

After two weeks of negotiations in New York in March 2014, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) ended with an agreement calling for accelerated progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and confirming the need for a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment in the set of international targets that will be introduced once the MDGs expire in 2015.

It was also the first time that a document has been produced that can be used to push the mainstreaming of gender equality into sustainable development goals, currently under negotiation.

Concerns regarding the possible dilution of women's rights during the process of negotiation were reduced with the withdrawal of the sovereignty clause, being lobbied for by certain countries, which would have allowed governments to ignore recommendations

interfering with their own traditions and practices.

Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights find specific reference in the document: the elimination of harmful practices, including child marriage and female genital mutilation, which, significantly, would in future not be referred to as "cutting"; the right to access abortion services and the development of sex education programmes for young people. The document calls for the elimination and prevention of violence and for the prosecution of perpetrators.

It also calls on governments to address discriminatory social practices, laws and beliefs that undermine gender equality. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the executive director of UN Women, said the agreement represented "a milestone toward a transformative global development agenda that puts the empowerment of women and girls at its centre".

small-scale fisheries and the wellbeing of communities.

Women of small-scale fishing communities have become marginalized in the fisheries value chain, if not pushed out of it; their work, knowledge and capacities are generally poorly recognized and valued; and their interest is often not represented. They struggle with the burden of double workloads, poor working conditions, taboos and prejudices, sexual violence and psychological humiliation. A gender perspective of sustainable small scale fisheries development therefore needs a transformative approach focused on challenging the underlying root causes of gender injustice and inequality, including those resulting from patriarchal norms.

There is a tendency in the Guidelines to rely on gender mainstreaming and other measures of a more technical nature—making sure that policies are in place, for example, or promoting procedures—instead of advancing a substantive agenda for social change. An attempt of the CSOs to replace the term “gender mainstreaming”, which was seen as a concept which generally is poorly understood and applied, failed. The following example is from the chapter on Gender Equality, where the CSO proposal for alternative meaningful wording is erased and the term gender mainstreaming is kept in the adopted text: “All parties should recognize that achieving gender equality requires concerted efforts by all and that gender mainstreaming, ~~gender equity and justice, with the aim of addressing the unequal power relations between men and women,~~ should be an integral part of all small-scale fisheries development strategies.” (Text strikeout added)

The text of the Guidelines often cites the phrase “including marginal and vulnerable groups”. The CSOs strongly lobbied for this. This reference can be considered as one of the strengths of the Guidelines because it emphasizes an inclusive approach. However in many societies vulnerable groups are generally associated as targets of social welfare and not as agents of social change. An inclusive approach is no guarantee of equal benefits of policies and programmes. While women (and women’s organizations) in small-scale fisheries are marginalized, they are also often subjected to patronizing attitudes with little opportunity to make their own decisions on issues of importance to their lives, livelihoods and wellbeing.

A major limitation of the Guidelines is of course its voluntary nature and this is

explicitly emphasized in Chapter 2 (Nature and Scope) where the text says “These Guidelines should be interpreted and applied in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions.” This reference is repeatedly made in the Guidelines. National legal systems and their institutions generally reflect prevailing gender relations and other social inequalities. In societies with rigid gender relations what this means is that the text of the Guidelines concerning gender equality and women’s participation may not be applied or be applied in only a limited way.

The Chair’s Text, despite several weaknesses, does provide an opportunity for a transformative plan of action for implementation. This includes gender issues. It recognizes the importance of adhering to human rights standards and gender equality as fundamental to development. The Guidelines have several references that address key issues of importance to women in small-scale fisheries and communities and the promotion of equal rights and opportunities in small-scale fisheries development. However it remains to be seen how the text will be interpreted and applied by States and other relevant parties, including fisheries organizations. Women’s rights and gender issues are generally issues of a sensitive nature and often meet resistance, denial or low priority.

In Chapter 2 (Nature and Scope), the text says: “To ensure transparency and accountability in the application of the Guidelines, it is important to ascertain which activities and operators are considered small-scale, and to identify vulnerable and marginalized groups needing greater attention.... States should ensure that this identification and application are guided by meaningful and substantive participatory, consultative, multi-level and objective-oriented processes so that the voices of both men and women are heard.”

This certainly opens up opportunities for actors in the small-scale fisheries, including women, to make their voices heard. However, they should be seen not as “objects of development solutions” but as “agents of social change”. Therefore it is of crucial importance that CSOs, including women-in-fisheries organizations, promote a human rights-based approach to the small-scale fisheries sector and jointly work out a powerful action plan for the implementation of the Guidelines that focus on transformative change for equitable, gender just, and sustainable small-scale fisheries development. ❏

**The Chair’s Text, despite several weaknesses, does provide an opportunity for a transformative plan of action for implementation.**

# A yawning gender gap

Research on the interaction between humans and the marine environment is incomplete without the significant role of women as fishers

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The inclusion of gender research is necessary for rigorous social and ecological approaches to small-scale fisheries. Within specific sectors it is recognized that women fish, but there is still a real need to include gender analysis in small-scale fisheries research and management. A gender approach to small-scale fisheries fits well with emerging ecosystem approaches that intentionally work at the intersection of social and ecological systems. Ecosystem approaches move away from a single stock assessment model of management towards a more complex understanding of the effects of multiple and interacting fisheries on the marine ecosystem.

The path of gender and fisheries research has been heavily influenced and guided by both the gender and development approach and the sustainable development approach. Over time the focus has shifted away from women-only approaches towards gender approaches that not only make up for a lack of information on women but also help examine the role gender plays in the interactions between women and men and the natural resources they rely on. While early work focused on the gendered division of labour in fisheries, the emphasis is now on livelihood approaches that pay attention to women's pre- and post-fishing activities as part of the fisheries economic

value chain, and also includes issues of poverty, food security, and human rights.

Over 25 years ago, Margaret Chapman wrote a groundbreaking review of the gender division of fishing labour in Oceania. Chapman's review detailed the social and cultural contexts that shaped the diverse ways in which women and men engage in fishing, but first and foremost she pointed out that women do fish. Chapman's work described the gender division of labour in fishing, with women's fishing primarily occurring in intertidal habitats, and men's fishing in deeper water habitats. Because women and men were found to use different fishing methods and fished in different habitats, their role in the marine ecosystem would also be distinct. Therefore, to understand the role of humans in the marine ecosystem it is necessary to include the fishing of both women and men.

To examine the different ecological roles of women and men in the marine environment, we reviewed the small-scale fishing practices of women and men from around the world. We limited our review to research from the past 20 years—the period 1992 to 2012. Important sources of information of women's engagement in the fisheries include serial publications such as *Yemaya*, and the SPC Women and Fisheries Information Bulletin. Other important sources include the Global Symposia on Gender and Fisheries, and on Women in Fisheries, which have emerged as part of the Asian Fisheries Forums. Using these resources, as well as other peer reviewed publications we were able to identify 106 case studies that had included women in their characterization of small-scale fisheries.

The case studies we reviewed often described the fishing methods, the types of animals that made up the catch, and the marine habitats that women and men used while fishing. These descriptions can be very helpful in illustrating how women and men interact with the marine ecosystem. Another pattern we found was that while fishing was often described, it was less likely to be counted. Counting how many people fish, how much they catch, and how much they fish (a measure of hours spent fishing or the number of hooks and traps or size of nets used), is an important part of fisheries science and allows researchers and managers to understand the how much or how little pressure human fishing is putting on the marine ecosystem. Because women's fishing is less likely to be counted, the contribution of women to fisheries and the potential impacts

DANIKA KLEIBER



Women's fishing is less likely to be counted, the contribution of women to fisheries are essentially invisible

of their fishing on the marine environment are essentially invisible. Women's fishing may be less likely to be counted because it is assumed to be small in terms of overall human pressure on the marine ecosystem.

In many of the case studies we looked at we found that women were described as mostly participating in gleaning in the intertidal habitats such as mangroves, rocky shores, and seagrass beds, while men mostly used other fishing methods in sub-tidal habitats such as reefs and open water. However this was not found in every case and it is important not to assume that this pattern is universal. There were examples of women fishing in boats just as often as men, and of men gleaning. It's also important to note that fishing practices can often change over time and that includes gender differences in fishing practices.

In most of the case studies we examined, women and men caught both fish and invertebrates although women's catch tended to consist mostly of shells and other invertebrates, while men's catch was mostly fish. The researcher S.V. Siar's observation that 'Shells are for women, fish are for men' is common in the Pacific but we also found similar examples from other places in the world such as South Africa, Egypt, Spain, and the United States.

While we were interested in the ways that women and men fish, we understood the importance of recognizing that these differences are driven by the social and cultural context rather than by biological and physical differences. Women are not physically limited from non-gleaning fishing methods as demonstrated by their participation in diving, hook and line fishing, net fishing, and trap fishing in many different places around the world. Rather it is their concurrent social obligations that often limit the types of fishing women participate in. In the words of the researcher M. Tekanene describing women's fishing in Kiribati: "Gleaning shellfish is women's major fishing activity because it can be performed close to home, takes relatively little time, require no costly fishing equipment and may be performed in the company of children." Thus, the obligations of domestic work and childcare that are traditionally performed by women forms a cultural backdrop in which the type of fishing that women engage in is shaped by their larger role in society. The social context that shapes women's fishing also shapes men's fishing.

By examining women's fishing as well as men's fishing, the importance of intertidal habitats in understanding the ecological impact of small-scale fisheries becomes apparent. While mangroves, seagrasses, and other near

shore habitats have been identified as serving the ecological function of protecting juvenile fish for offshore fisheries, in many cases gleaners also use these habitats as fishing grounds. This can lead to tension between different fisheries. In El Salvador and the Comoros Islands, the intertidal fishing that women participated in was viewed as having a negative effect on men's offshore fisheries because it was felt that women's fishing threatened the juvenile fish and their habitats.

The inclusion of women's fishing also emphasizes the importance of shells. Shells and other marine invertebrates are not as well studied as fish. Similarly, the impact of common management measures such as marine protected areas (MPAs) is more often studied in fish. MPAs as a fisheries management tool may work differently for fish as compared to many invertebrates. For example as fish abundance increases within MPAs there is often a spill over effect where adult fish leave the MPA and may be caught by fishers. For certain shells that don't move, or move very little, the spill over of adults will not occur, but instead the benefit may come from the MPA acting as a breeding ground that may source juveniles to unprotected areas. While there are many studies of the spill over effect of fish in MPAs, the use of MPAs as a source of invertebrate juveniles is not as well studied or understood. By including women's fisheries the data gaps that exist in our understanding of marine ecology and ecosystem scale fisheries management are highlighted.

Women fish, and so the key question is why there are so few case studies that include women's fishing. Definitions of fisher and fishing often leave out part time fishers, subsistence fishers and gleaners. Because women are often heavily represented in all three of these categories, these narrow definitions lead to women's participation in fishing being overlooked. Furthermore data gathering methods that limit the respondents to men, or define "head of household" or "community leader" to be only men are also more likely to overlook women's fishing.

The exclusion of women's fishing from small-scale fisheries assessment leads to data gaps in the role of humans in the marine ecosystem, and often perpetuates inaccurate assumptions about the gender division of labour in fishing. To include women it may be necessary to change the way in which the very words "fishing" and "fishers" are defined, and how small-scale fisheries data are collected. An understanding of women and men's fishing is necessary for ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. ❏

**The exclusion of women's fishing from small-scale fisheries assessment leads to data gaps in the role of humans in the marine ecosystem, and often perpetuates inaccurate assumptions about the gender division of labour in fishing.**

# Following Fallon and Grace

The director of a documentary which pays tribute to Nova Scotia's small-scale fisheries reflects on her experiences of making the film

By **Corinne Dunphy** (corinnedunphy@gmail.com), is a specialist in social documentary, and is the maker of the film "Well Fished"

I need to buy Graval", I told Mom, days before I got on to the exciting yet worrying task of making my first documentary film. It was mid-May in Nova Scotia. I was at Mom and Dad's for a week, preparing for the shoots. I didn't have much idea as to what I was doing. The nerves were getting to me. I was sure the production would be a complete flop. But thankfully as it turned out, both luck and Graval, the anti-nausea medication, were on my side that spring!

I was making a documentary called 'Well Fished', based on the experiences of two young women growing up in rural Nova Scotia who belong to fishing families. The character-driven film was a homage to the inhabitants of the province, offering a positive outlook to the young people who live and work in a province facing many of the serious problems affecting the future of small coastal communities across the map.

The film introduces us to Fallon and Grace's worlds. Both hail from eastern Nova Scotia—Fallon from Whitehead, Guysborough Co. and Grace from Antigonish. Fallon spends her days fishing lobster and trapping mackerel onboard the Eastern Maverick with her father. The sun-soaked stripe running below her eyes shows that she spends most of her time outdoors in the sun. When she isn't helping on board, she is photographing the world before her: ocean scenes, critters, pretty much anything outdoors.

Fallon is the second youngest of five daughters. Her father, Captain Pat Conway had help throughout the years with the older girls. Now it's Fallon's time and she loves the work so much that she finished school a semester early to spend her days fishing.

If you travel North about an hour to Antigonish, you will find another young woman with a similar story. At first glance she even looks like Fallon. Grace MacDougall arrives at the wharf every morning, her deep brown hair tied in a high ponytail, a small headband keeping wisps away from her face. You notice her smile before anything else. Grace finds humour in pretty much everything. She is what they call "salt of the earth". Her authenticity, insight and light-hearted spirit make those around her feel at ease. Onboard the Jan and Grace, Grace, her cousin Mark and her father Captain Dan MacDougall appear to work together in complete harmony. There is a rhythm to their work—it is top priority but they are also having a good time, filled with laughter. Grace speaks at length about her commitment to continuing the way of life she was born into. This day and age, it doesn't come easy. But Grace is finding a way to make her dreams work in what is becoming a more and more difficult industry.

Being a Nova Scotian, I have seen first-hand how gloomy the province's economic picture is. As young people migrate out in search of better opportunities, small communities, with their rapidly-ageing populace, face challenging times. Traditional industries are on the decline and it's becoming harder to keep money circulating in rural communities. Despite these shifts, however, it is very important that the involvement of youth in such communities remains strong.

One of the direct causes of the decline of the traditional, small-scale fisheries is the rise of industrial fisheries on a global scale. The industrial fisheries sector poses a great threat not only to those employed in the small-scale fisheries, such as the families of Fallon and Grace—and indirectly to their communities as well—but also to the environment. The Nova Scotian small-scale fisheries may have its own flaws but it is striving towards becoming more sustainable, trying to take from the earth in a more conscious way. Through 'Well Fished', I wanted to illuminate the issues that not only directly affect those on the east coast but all citizens—Canadian and beyond—who care about the environment and for the people who harvest our food.

A striking aspect of the small-scale fisheries is the strong family ties that are associated

CORINNE DUNPHY



Fallon and Grace have no problem being the only women on board. The times are indeed changing!



with making a living on the water. Grace and Fallon both told me that if it wasn't for being raised in a fishing family they probably would never have considered fishing. Licences are no longer affordable for the young who wish to own and operate their own vessel, and so, fishing licences tend to stay within the family. Grace tells me, "Dad fishes a berth system, it's more of a gentleman's word...not really in legal terms at all. It's the old traditions where some fishermen have these berths and no one else fishes there. It's nice that it is a little less competitive." She is uncertain of how long this practice will continue and is concerned about what the future holds.

It's an overwhelming experience to be out on the water hours before my usual wakeup. The horizon is a riot of colours. It is very peaceful. Then a familiar feeling of guilt when I realize that while I have been trying to capture the beautiful landscape on film, everyone else is busy working their fingers to the bone.

Another thing one notices on the boat is the respect the deckhands have for the Captain; in the case of Fallon and Grace, their fathers. The appreciation Fallon has for Pat is clear to see; she is aware that he knows the waters in the area better than anyone else, aside from maybe his late brother Mark who had taught him all he knew.

Taking a break from the mackerel trap, Fallon comments on the physical demands the work places on her small, 18 year-old build but quickly adds that she has worked her small build just as hard as the men. Fallon and her father have an entertaining relationship both off the boat and on it. Each feels an obvious pride in the other. Pat is a quiet man with a playful sense of humour. He cranks up good tunes on the radio and often teases Fallon,

making the long hours fun. And what long hours they were—from daybreak until sunset some days!

"It's kind of cool working with Dad," says Grace "because it opens up new doors in our relationship, and I know me and my siblings definitely appreciate that. We hold on to that and that's what makes you respect him on a whole new level. He's so knowledgeable with fishing and he's been doing it for so long" she adds. Much like Fallon and Pat, this duo's dynamic is also pleasantly energetic. I've witnessed dancing, singing and even a bit of stand-up comedy, all before lunchtime. The work is physically demanding and involves long hours in every weather condition. I never heard a complaint other than a few abstruse belly grumbles.

Grace and Fallon have no problem being the only women onboard. "You definitely feel a little different on the wharf. The guys respect you. Dad may talk about when my sister or me fish, and mentions that we know what we're doing, how we've proven ourselves and that it doesn't have to be a male's job," to Dad may talk about when my sister or me fish, and mention that we know what we're doing, how we've proven ourselves, and that it doesn't have to be a male's job," says Grace. She points out that there are even a few female captains in the region. The times are indeed changing!

As the times change, the land and the sea remain integral to Nova Scotia's heritage, engrained in every family's history and enmeshed in the social fabric. If this social fabric is to be saved and preserved, it is vital that young women like Fallon and Grace, be empowered with complete economic and social support to pursue a sustainable livelihood in small-scale fisheries, which is clearly their livelihood of choice. ❏

## Interactive map of fish markets in Chennai

What's New, Webby?



Fish markets are an important part of the overall supply chain of fish and fish products, acting as a collection point from various production sources, both capture and culture, and providing consumers a range of choice.

Chennai—the capital of the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu and the fourth largest city in India—is an important fish producing and consuming hub. Not only does the city receive large harvests of fin and shell fishes from the Bay of Bengal, it also receives fresh water fish from aquaculture farms within Tamil Nadu and from neighbouring states such as Andhra Pradesh.

The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation, under its Project entitled 'Safe Fish' has compiled the basic details of 96 fish markets of Greater Chennai, which would be of use to consumers, the Tamil Nadu Department of Fisheries, Chennai Municipal Corporation, policy makers and those interested in the safe and hygienic marketing of fish and products. The addition of useful details such as volumes traded, average prices, and so on, are in the pipeline.

[http://bobpigo.org/html\\_site/fishmarket/index.htm](http://bobpigo.org/html_site/fishmarket/index.htm) ❏

By **Ramya Rajagopalan**  
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# Mapping markets in Mumbai

**By actively participating in the mapping of the city's fish markets, Mumbai's fish vendors take an important step towards having a greater say in the development of the city**

By **Shuddhawati S Peke** (shuddhawati@gmail.com), Programme Associate, ICSF

On the western coast of India, Greater Mumbai, with an estimated population of 12.5 million, is home to the women's wing of the Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti (MMKS), a local state union of fishworkers. Recently, MMKS Women's Wing, which has been struggling for women fish vendors' rights, took an important first step towards having a greater say in the city's development by getting the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) to agree to a joint exercise of mapping the city's fish markets.

Mumbai has 60 municipal fish markets and any number of informal ones. Informal fish markets include street fish markets as well as privately owned fish markets. Apart from these, Mumbai's *koliwad*s (urban fishing villages) also have landing centres, auction halls and retail markets. The development of these fish markets, of urban fishing villages and of infrastructure related to transport and other activities falls under the purview of the MCGM. Currently, the MCGM is drafting the development plan for the period 2014 to 2034.

As part of this process, the MCGM, after preparing a land use plan, called for public consultations based on twelve different themes including land use, transportation, environmental sustainability, formal housing and public amenities, education

and gender. This was jointly done with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to ensure public participation. The MMKS Women's Wing was also involved with this exercise. They brought to the discussion issues of the women fish vendors operating in fish markets and landing centres, in particular the need for land and amenities for their activities.

According to MCGM data, there are 60 municipal fish markets in Greater Mumbai but, up until this particular survey exercise, there was no data on informal fish markets in the city. Not surprisingly, there was also no initiative until recently from the government to provide basic amenities to informal vendors. Now however, the National Policy on Street Vendors (2009) makes mandatory the protection of street vendors and hawkers by formulating town vending committees, registering hawkers and giving them identity cards, and delineating markets or hawker's zones. At the request of the MCGM, the women's wing of the MMKS in coordination with MCGM and local fish vendors in a month mapped all the formal and informal fish markets in the city.

The survey found that while Mumbai city has formal markets, suburban areas are covered largely by informal markets. There are 30 formal markets in Mumbai city while there are 22 in western suburbs and only twelve in eastern suburbs. The suburbs are largely covered by unstructured and semi structured or fully structured informal markets, located or built on government land and funded from discretionary funds of local government representatives.

A number of development issues were revealed by the survey. Commercial activities including large corporate markets had displaced a number of old fish markets. In the case of the Babulnath Municipal Market, a big business house received sanction to set up a shopping complex due to which 20 women fish vendors were displaced. At the Habib private fish market, the owner evacuated fish vendors systematically by cutting off the electricity and water supply, and now for the past 15 years the place provides poor housing to migrants in the city. In the Byculla Gujarji private market and the Chira Bazaar private market the owners have stopped providing basic amenities, and are waiting for fish vendors to leave to give the land over for commercial development.

SHUDDHAWATI S PEKE



In the Byculla Gujarji private market the owners have stopped providing basic amenities. Vendors have no security for either their fish, or themselves

Municipal markets provide formalised built structures and tax the vendors on their premises. However, in many cases fish markets are pushed to a corner with poor amenities and unhygienic conditions. Vendors have no security for either their fish, or themselves. Street fish markets have another set of issues including absence of regulation and security.

In Mumbai, there are three routes to the development of urban market areas: through government funding; through Public Private Partnership (PPP); and self development. Wholly government funded projects are extremely rare. Government agencies prefer to develop up-market projects. While the PPP model is supposed to be inclusive, builders and private developers attempt to corner premium space for their commercial activities. Often residential complexes are built by the private developers on space allotted to fish markets in the development area, leading to clashes between residents and fish market users. Activists working with women therefore recommend self development as this ensures maximum benefit to vendors and gives control over their land and land use. They are not faced with the constant threat of commercial and semi-commercial developments under the PPP model that coexist with their establishments, and gradually bring pressure on the fish vendors to move out for various purported reasons like public nuisance and hygiene. In the year ahead, the task for MMKS is to use the learning from the mapping survey to advocate for transparent and inclusive process of market development.

This mapping process has achieved many important things. Formal fish markets, and for the first time even informal markets, got documented officially by the city corporation. Photographic documentation has been created, which will be an important reference source and evidence for fish vendors to fight for their rights in the face of future developmental activities. The next step in the exercise is circulating a questionnaire developed in collaboration with market department of MCGM to get detailed information on fish markets. A comprehensive report including the survey and the questionnaire data will then be submitted to the MCGM. The MCGM Commissioner has promised to call for a meeting, based on the report of fish vendor representatives, to settle fish market issues one by one. Over the next two decades, the city is looking at large developmental projects and expansion activities that will change its urban landscape. Informal establishments will face increasing problems to safeguard user rights and access basic amenities. ❏

**Interview with Maria Odette Carvalho Martins (51), fisherwoman, leader of the community of Batoque in Ceará, Brazil and of the National Articulation of Fisherwomen of Brazil (ANP)**

By **Naina Pierri** (pierrinai@gmail.com), Member of ICSF

**Where are you from and when did you start on fishing?**

I am from Balbino in Cascavel, Ceará. I was eight when I started fishing with my father. I came to Batoque at 21, when I got married. Now I am 51 years old and I continue to fish. My husband is a farmer and he also fishes, just like my father. We have five sons and seven grandchildren. On the week-ends, we sell food to tourists.

**When and why did you start to fight for your community?**

Batoque has a beautiful beach and it is near Fortaleza city. Since the 1980s, many different powerful persons tried to evict us and seize our land for tourism development and real estate speculation. Armed personnel burned our houses; they threatened us; they even murdered some fishers. I started fighting when I was 25, with the support of a catholic priest. Then one of the speculators forbade fishers from selling their products and from using the land for agriculture and making new houses. In 1989, we created an association of which I became President in 1993.

**Did you face difficulties at home when you first became an activist?**

In the beginning I had to ask my husband for permission to participate in such activities but after a compromise was struck in the presence of the priest, he became more accepting. After that, if he ever tried to deny me permission, I would remind him about the compromise! And as far as my sons are concerned, I had the support of other women of the community who would take care of them when I was out.

**Please tell us about the conflict that took place over land rights.**

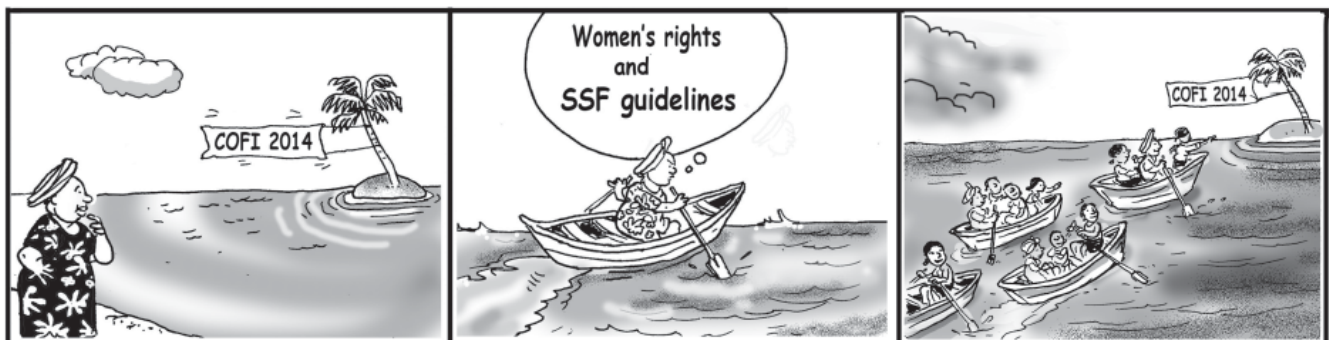
In 2003, after many violent incidents and judicial processes, we won the struggle for the conversion of Batoque into an Extractive Reserve, that is, a conserved area where local users have exclusive rights over the use of the land and resources. The external pressures and the violence are over now but we have to continue to defend our land because today we face the new problem of one section of the community illegally selling their houses for the purpose of tourism.

**What are your experiences like now?**

During the period of intensive mobilization, though I suffered threats as well as two murder attempts, I was not afraid. After the declaration of the Reserve, I had health problems, and, for some time, I couldn't participate actively in our struggles. I'm better now; more active again and I feel happy about this, but my main satisfaction comes from seeing young women take up the leadership of the struggles of fishing communities, as has happened in the case of the National Articulation. ❏

**YEMAYA MAMA**

*Mama's got it right!*



FILM

# A Mae e o Mar/The Mother and The Sea

(Portuguese with French, Italian and English subtitles; 97mins)

A film by Gonçalo Tocha

This review by **Alain Le Sann** (ad.lesann@orange.fr) has been translated into English by **Danièle Le Sann**

On the Portuguese beaches of Vila Chà, in the fishing village of North of Porto, only nine fishing boats are hauled up onto the sand after a fishing expedition today. Fifty years ago, there used to be a hundred and twenty. The sea is still there; so are the beach and the rocks; the milieu hasn't changed but the fishing activity has been shattered.


It is in this ordinary port that director Gonçalo Tocha decided to focus his camera on the forgotten past—a past that lies buried in the memories of the elderly and evoked only occasionally in local newspaper articles. Indeed, Vila Chà's past is unique not only in Portugal but in all Europe for it was home to fisherwomen who not only went out to sea but often commanded their own boats and crew. Today, only one of them, a sixty five-year old woman, still goes out to sea to fish and gathers seaweed on the beach to sell to a factory. With her help, Tocha brings back to living memory the experiences of these forgotten women who fought for the right to command their own boats and their mostly-male crew.

As the film unfolds, we hear the old women and men rediscover the unique importance of this group of women. We hear of storms and of the dangers that lurked on the storm-slashed coast with its heavy Atlantic swells; we hear of how hard they toiled and how full of uncertainty their lives were. We hear of their love of the sea and of their work—how one of them locked herself in her house when she realised she might have to stop going out to sea. Another,

ninety now, continues to fish with a line from the beach. We also hear the men pay tribute to their wives and daughters who often accompanied them onboard their ships.

At the end of the film, facing the setting sun, one of the fishermen in the evening of his life declaims with lyrical passion his love for the sea “*which gave life to the Earth*” and of which he says “*We are her children*”. His blood is “*salted water*”; the sea is his goddess, but he laments that she has become “*the Earth's garbage can*” and understands her “*anger at what has been done to her*”. The film is moving, yet certain aspects of its construction are also disconcerting, for example, the director himself appearing on screen.

Recipient of the best documentary award at the Doclisboa film festival held in Lisboa, 2013, *A Mae e o Mar* is slow-paced with deliberately long sequences to give us time to absorb a sense of the place, its history and its inhabitants. A particular strength of the film is that it is able to marshal memory without nostalgia. Overall, the film is a superb tribute to a band of strong, independent and feisty fisherwomen, forgotten by history, in a small port that, sadly, is increasingly becoming a seaside resort.

For details, visit: <http://vimeo.com/78641952> 



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Writers and potential contributors to YEMAYA, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women

and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer. Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.