



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

# Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

## From the Editor

The recently-concluded 6th Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF6), held in Bangkok from 3 to 6 August, underscored the need for the effective implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines)—a key demand uniting women across the small-scale fisheries sector today. In session after session, various presentations on gender in the fisheries made the case for a speedy, sustained and meaningful implementation of the Guidelines. At the same time, there was agreement that far from being a uniform strategy, implementation would in fact be a challenging exercise, involving regional specificity and local adaptation.

A key issue that complicates the task of implementation is the lack of official statistics and data across countries on women's work in the SSF. This scarcity of data is in turn the result of how fishing as an economic activity is defined, emphasizing only production or the act of catching fish, with the rest of the full spectrum of activities, from net-mending and bait preparation to cleaning, processing and selling the catch, being largely ignored. In Brazil, as we see in this issue of Yemaya, the use of such a narrow definition has led to the exclusion of women from critical aspects of social security coverage. This skewed and partial view, which renders invisible the labour of women and of other marginalized sections, such as that of the migrant workforce, is clearly rejected in the SSF Guidelines, which call for the valorization of the entire fish value chain.

The exclusion of women therefore is a structural phenomenon, rooted at the level of policy, which often is framed in ways that suggest that women in the SSF either do not exist, or that their labour does not matter. While the process of enumeration and policy-making can and often does exclude women, presentations at GAF6 revealed that even where women are formally included in the mainstream of SSF policy, they remain marginalized at the grassroots due to a range of reasons, including systemic capacity deficits such as lack of funds, or cultural taboos and societal prejudices. For example, as we see in this issue of Yemaya, in Lao PDR, despite the promulgation of a national gender equity policy, the fisheries sector, starved of funds and opportunities, continues to uphold traditional gender divisions of labour, while in the Kiribati fisheries, a peculiar amalgam of "cultural norms, traditional governance structures and the gender-blindness of fisheries authorities" impedes the inclusion of women in government-initiated fisheries' co-governance models. Again, in this context, the SSF Guidelines provide guidance, suggesting entry points for women in the fisheries to exercise, and demand the recognition of their rights, in all aspects of the fish value chain.

Addressing gender inequalities and the concerns of women is an urgent need in this context. The SSF Guidelines are an important starting point towards this agenda. The next steps would be to take forward the campaign to include provisions of the Guidelines as part of policies for small-scale fisheries, particularly for the recognition of women and their rights within the sector. ❖



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# Gathering cooperation

**Women mollusk gatherers of rural Costa Rica are leading the way in becoming self-reliant and organized**

By **Aracelly Jimenez** (coopemoluscos chomes@gmail.com), President, CoopeMoluscos R.L., **Vivienne Solís-Rivera** (vsolis@coopesolidar.org), **Ivannia Ayales-Cruz** (iayales@yahoo.com), and **Paula M. Pérez-Briceño** (pmperez@coopesolidar.org), Associates, CoopeMoluscos R.L., and **Estefani Solórzano-Chaves** (chaves.estef@gmail.com), Consultant, CoopeSoliDar R.L., with support from all members of CoopeMoluscos R.L.

Costa Rica has about 14,800 artisanal fishers who inhabit coastal areas of the country. Artisanal fisheries are among the most vulnerable sectors, with the highest levels of poverty for rural livelihood in the country.

Mollusk gathering from mangroves is an important source of livelihood for women in the country. There are over five thousand women mollusk gatherers, engaged in harvesting shellfish in mangroves in the country. Most of these women are heads of their households and the main wage earners. Chomes district is home to around a hundred mollusk gatherers.

According to the mollusk gatherers in Chomes, they earn between USD 1000 and USD 2000 as annual income. The average family income of around USD 160 per month was less than half the poverty wage of USD 355 per month for the year 2015. The poverty wage represented the average wage of the lowest 20 per cent of the Costa Rican population.

CoopeMoluscos R.L., is a community organization of women in Chomes, who harvest mangrove mollusks for their livelihood. It is located in the Central

Pacific coast of Costa Rica in the province of Puntarenas, in the Chomes district.

The organization of women in the Chomes started with the emergency caused by the red tide that lasted for eight months in 2013, resulting in loss of income for mollusk gatherers. A red tide is a natural phenomenon, the result of an increase in the amount of algae that produces a red coloration in the sea. Such algal blooms produce a lot of toxins that make shellfish and fish unfit for consumption. As one woman explained, "We had to give value to our productive activity. We had to look for work and to find new productive opportunities to survive." The organizing initiative was supported by the National Institute for Social Aid (IMAS), which coordinated training and work for the women in the community. In 2014, the National Institute for Cooperative Development (INFOCOOP) supported the women to form a cooperative organization.

Today the organization has 96 women members of different ages and from different backgrounds. They have started a mangrove recovery process with reforestation and clean-up actions. The organization has also applied for a use permit by the government so that mollusk gathering is formally recognized and protected against being termed "illegal". The women also have other entrepreneurship ideas for income generation. These include a soda counter that can sell food to fishermen to take when they go fishing and rural tourism activities such as sharing their knowledge of mollusk gathering with tourists. A storage facility for preserving the shellfish is also on the list.

The women know that the work is not easy, and are aware of the threats facing the mangrove ecosystem on which their livelihood depends. The damage to the mangroves is due to a lack of social awareness in the community as well as a lack of regulation of the activities of large private companies engaged in shrimp aquaculture in the neighborhood. In addition, the women have to worry about health problems caused by difficult working conditions, and dealing with markets that are unfair and heavily dependent on middlemen.

The mollusk gatherers work involves many risks. The risks and hazards the women most frequently encounter include cuts from branches or glass, wounds from thorns,

COOPESOLIDAR R.L.



Mollusk gathering from mangroves is an important source of livelihood for women in Costa Rica. The workday of the mollusk gathering women is long and hard

falls and broken bones, skin fungus, worms, arthritis and stroke resulting from sudden temperature changes; crocodiles in the channels; intense sun, wind, rain and storm; insect bites, snakes, jellyfish wounds, brittle nails, infections of all kinds, pain in the back, legs and feet, assaults from people outside the community, bee stings, boat accidents, mosquitoes, dehydration, exposure to toxic algae, heatstroke, and allergies from contact with mud.

While it is not easy to counter these problems, the women have devised certain creative protection strategies: they carry food and water and wear gloves and shoes while harvesting; they walk slowly and carefully, smearing mud on their arms or using repellents to prevent mosquito bites; they wear belts or use painkillers to relieve backache; and they wash up thoroughly after getting out of the mangroves, using chlorine to disinfect their hands and feet.

The mollusk gatherers of Chomes are important to the development of their community. They play a critical role in giving their families a better quality of life. Thanks to them, other women in the community are becoming more environmentally conscious. They know how to fish and support their peers in the task. They perform various tasks related to fishing in their community: marking the rope that measures the depth for fishing; helping

with sewing and repairing nets; loading nets onto the boats; and preparing food for the men going out on fishing trips. In addition, they have their own work in the mangroves, and of selling the harvest. Afterwards, they return home to continue with housework. They are the ones who provide childcare, attend to their houses and companions, and help children with schoolwork. Some have even gone back to studying once again. Furthermore, they say: “If fishing is not good, or if mollusk gathering is not good, we organize community activities to raise funds to help the organization”.

The workday of the mollusk gathering women is long and hard. They generally do not receive much help from their partners or other family members. What then is the hope for the future? Organizations such as INCOPECA, CoopeSoliDar R.L. and CoopeMoluscos R.L. have been working towards providing long-term support for this group of women. They hope to integrate the group under the framework of the Small-scale Guidelines, and gain the support of various government and civil society institutions to ensure decent working conditions for these women. They expect that the work of mollusk gathering will be formally recognized by the government of the Republic of Costa Rica within a year, thus ensuring access rights to the territory and the mangrove resources for the community. ❏

**The mollusk gatherers of Chomes are important to the development of their community. They play a critical role in giving their families a better quality of life**



## Milestones

By **Ramya Rajagopalan** (ramya.rajagopalan@gmail.com), Programme Associate, ICSF

### An Extraordinary Journey

The newly-released document ‘ICSF’s Journey with Women in Fisheries’ marks a milestone not only in the history of the International Collective in Support of Fisheries (ICSF), an organization that has consistently supported, if not pioneered, work on issues of gender in the fisheries but also in the history of the small-scale fisheries sector as a whole, whose narrative has been made richer and more inclusive on account of it. The document embodies a feminist outlook not just in terms of its content but also in the way it was written—as a collective process with inputs from a large number of members of ICSF who participated actively in the ICSF-Women in Fisheries (WIF) programme and collectively pooled their thoughts and ideas on the basis of their long years of experience in the field.

Co-authored by Nalini Nayak from India, Cornelie Quist from The Netherlands, Maria Cristina Maneschky and Naina Perri from Brazil, and Jackie Sunde from South Africa, the document at one level is a fascinating, regional-

specific account of women’s struggles in the fisheries across the world. At another, it reveals how working together enabled these and other women in the ICSF-WIF programme to forge bonds of solidarity that were deeply empowering.

Starting with an account of an extraordinary meeting on the sidelines of the 1984 FAO conference where fisherwomen from Asia and Africa and women from the Small-scale fisheries in France who identified themselves simply as ‘wives’ of fishermen met and talked to each other about their lives, to its formalization in the early 1990s, and the strengthening and expansion of its activities thereafter, over the years the ICSF-WIF programme has continued to give voice to and create space for women in the SSF. The commonality of issues and the power of women to overcome adversities through collective action is a powerful and inspiring message of the document.

The document may be accessed at <http://www.icsf.net/en/page/1076-History.html>



# Fighting invisibility

Fisherwomen in Brazil demand to be heard on their right to social security and decent work

By **Beatriz Ferrari**  
(biacalza@gmail.com),  
Independent journalist,  
Brazil

This article about fisherwomen in Brazil, when submitted to another publication, came back with the word ‘fisherwomen’ underlined in red. ‘Fishermen?’ asked a comment in the margin. While the comment might have reflected the ingrained patriarchy and invisibilization of women prevalent in parts of Brazilian society, unfortunately, women at work seem to be invisible to the Brazilian government as well.

In Brazil, two federal decrees, 8424 and 8425, published in March 2015, defined the artisanal fisherman exclusively as the professional who pulled fish out of the water. All other professionals involved with support activities—mainly women responsible for secondary activities, such as manufacturing and repairing nets, cleaning the fish or fixing the boats—were registered not as ‘fishers’ but as ‘support workers’. Support workers, according to the decrees, were “similar to fishermen”.

The impact of the federal decrees is not only symbolic, but also practical. As the women are no longer considered official fishers, they are not entitled to pension granted by the government, called *defeso*, during periods when fishing is prohibited for environmental reasons.

“Sexism in fishing is beyond women’s relationship with men. We are seen as incapable by the government,” said Josana

Serrao Pinto, the national coordinator of the Movement of Fishermen and Fisherwomen (MPP). “The decree makes it clear that the government only considers men when it comes to fishing. It is a way of taking away our identity.” The sexist view of the government would impact the sizeable number of women engaged in various activities related to artisanal fishing. There are approximately one million artisanal fishermen in Brazil, according to the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture and Supply (MAPA) statistics published in 2011. MPP estimates that approximately 45 per cent of the artisanal fishers are women.

In enacting the decrees, the government overlooks the fact that when men are prohibited from fishing, women dependent on fishing for work are also affected, and hence, should be covered by the same pension. Martilene Lima, fisherwoman and also a coordinator at the MPP, explained, “Sometimes our own husbands forbid us to go to the open sea. In my case, I have always sewn the nets, taken care of the boat and cleaned the fish that my husband brought home from fishing. During periods of closure, I too can’t work. Fishing begins on the ground. It doesn’t take place only in the water.”

“The decrees affect all women who requested to register from March 2015 onwards. It is a loss of identity and autonomy, especially economic. But it’s not clear yet how many are affected,” said Erina Gomes, juridical advisor of the Pastoral Council of Fishermen. According to the Ministry of Labour, 48,000 women registered as workers involved with fishing from January 2015 to May 2016. These women would not be eligible for pension for the no-fish period.

In June, representatives of women small-scale fishers gathered in Brazil’s capital Brasilia, at a seminar on the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), to discuss, among other things, how to make the government recognize the rights of fisherwomen. One way forward suggested was a report to define women’s activity within fishing. This could be a step towards demanding recognition of work performed by women in the sector as part of fishing,

CONSELHO PASTORAL DOS PESCADORES (CPP)



Fisherwoman in Rio Grande do Norte state. In enacting the decrees, the government overlooks the fact that when men are prohibited from fishing, women dependent on fishing for work are also affected

and hence, a way to assert their citizenship and political and economic rights.

Another problem with the decrees was access to social security, in particular, post-retirement pension. After much lobbying and campaigning with the federal government, another decree, 8499, was published in June 2015. This decree included support workers in the artisanal fisheries access to pension.

However, fisherwomen still have difficulty accessing the National Social Security System (INSS) in case of occupational diseases related to fishing activities, as these diseases are not recognized by the INSS. "I've been asked if my stress injury was because I typed a lot. The government officials did not believe I was a fisherwoman because there were no calluses on my hands," complained Martilene at the MPP. "If we show up all beautiful and fancy in the INSS, no one believes that we are fisherwomen. For the government, fisherwoman can't use nail polish or lipstick. We have to be ugly."

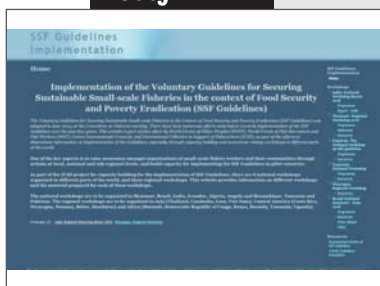
Before claiming their rights from the government, fisherwomen have to face sexism within the profession. "Our space as fisherwomen started to be recognized only since 2009. Men still try to intimidate us, to not lose their space. We've even had cases of sexual violence," said Josana of the MPP.

In a national meeting of the Articulation of Fisherwomen in 2013, the Ministry of Fisheries sent a male official to represent the ministry. Apart from not understanding the demands of women, the representative brought aprons and Bibles to distribute as gifts. "We felt very neglected and disrespected. We decided not to distribute these gifts," said the fisherwoman Cleonice Silva, who was also coordinator of the Articulation of Fisherwomen of Paraná state.

Fisherwomen are collectively managing to gradually overcome the obstacles of patriarchy within the fishing community and in the government. The awareness of the state and the professionals regarding fisheries' work-related diseases is one of them. Throughout 2016, fisherwomen from 16 states planned to gather in workshops organized by a partnership between the National Articulation of Fisherwomen (ANP), Ministry of Health, Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) and the Pastoral Council of Fishermen (CPP) to disseminate information on working conditions and health of women within the artisanal fisheries sector. "These meetings will be important to gather knowledge about our health and the Public Health System," pointed out Gicleia Maria Santos, fisherwoman of Cabo de Santo Agostinho (PE) and an ANP member. ❏

**"The decree makes it clear that the government only considers men when it comes to fishing. It is a way of taking away our identity"**

## What's New, Webby?



By **Ramya Rajagopalan** (ramya.rajagopalan@gmail.com), Programme Associate, ICSF

## Implementation of SSF Guidelines

This website is part of a joint effort by World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), World Forum of Fish Harvestors and Fish Workers (WFF), Centro Internazionale Crocevia, and International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) to disseminate information on the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines), especially through capacity building and awareness raising workshops in different parts of the world. As part of an International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) project for capacity building for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, eight national workshops and three

regional workshops are being organized in different parts of the world.

This website provides information about these workshops and carries associated documentation, including programme statements and reports. The national workshops will be organized in Myanmar, Brazil, India, Ecuador, Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania and Pakistan. The regional workshops will be held in Asia (Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam), Central America (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, Honduras) and Africa (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda).

<https://sites.google.com/site/ssfguidelines/home>

# What a woman!

**With fishing at sea traditionally a male occupation, abandoning the straitjacketing of gender roles, today some of the ‘watermen’ of Chesapeake Bay in Maryland are women**

By **Mariette Correa**  
(mariettec@gmail.com),  
Senior Programme  
Coordinator, ICSF

In Chesapeake Bay, located in Maryland in the United States, fishing continues to be an important occupation, with families carrying on the tradition for generations on end. The profession of ‘watermen’ is a venerated one, and the exploits of the region’s watermen legendary.

But among these watermen there are also a few women. This is a relatively recent development. Although women have long been involved in the business of fishing, their role has largely been seen as supportive and land-based.

Wives would get up at 3 or 4 in the morning to fix their husbands’ breakfasts, and would meet them in the evenings at the dock to help clean up and prep for the next day. Some adventurous women also manned the crab-picking houses, and others before that beacons the great lighthouses along the bay.

It was only in the post-World War II period that women began to go out to sea independently to fish. In 1982, women held 13 of 2320 commercial fishing licences in the state—today, they hold 566 out of the 6758 licences.

Being a traditionally male occupation, few men pass on the trade to their daughters. Crystal Jordan is one of the rare examples: for years, she and her father followed the crabs, moving up and down the bay together, on weekends and all summer, from April through December.

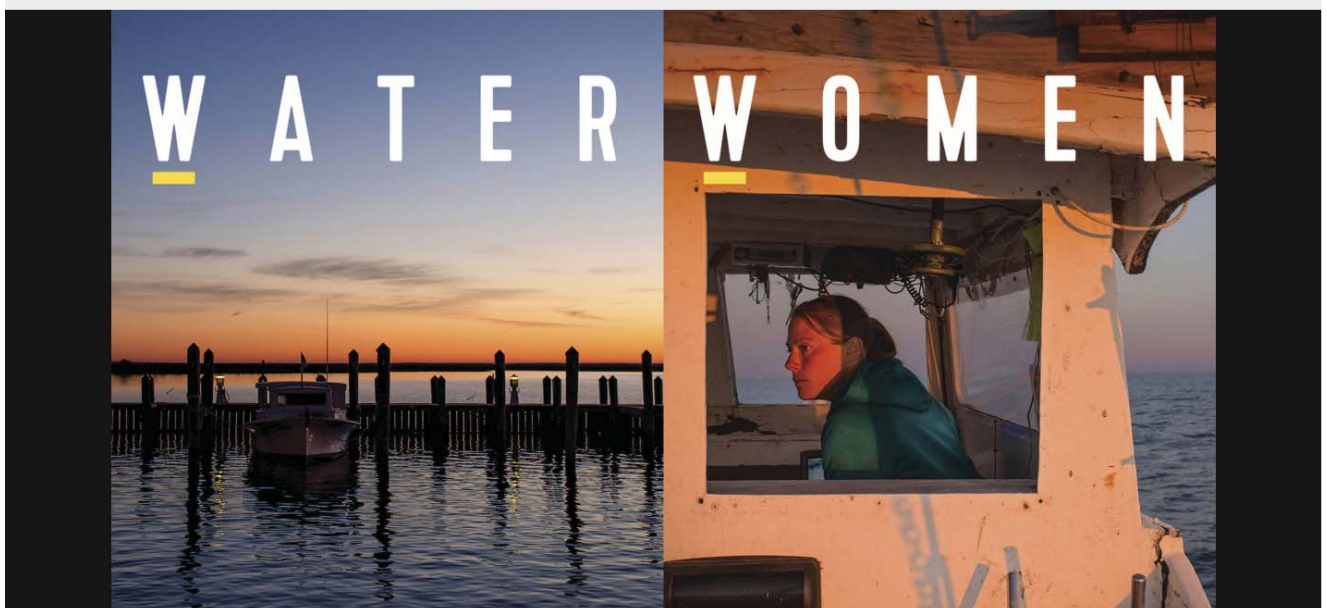
When her father was diagnosed with brain cancer, he took efforts to ensure that the necessary skills and knowledge were passed on. Once he died, Crystal began to go out to sea alone.

The occupation of watermen is one where outsiders are shunned. But, with the advent of aquaculture, which is not rigidly bound by tradition, more women have entered the profession. One such is Jill Buck, who has been fishing independently for six years now.

It was not easy at first—mistakes, like docking the boat too hard or filling the cages too high, were common. But by now the necessary confidence and skills have been acquired. Her husband, who currently works in a power plant, plans to join her on the boat next year.

Fewer young people are following in their parents’ footsteps. Commercial licences are limited and equipment is very expensive. There’s less to catch and more regulations. Nonetheless, a few more women are just starting out, and others are continuing the work of a lifetime.


Like Lois Lednum, who married Dickie, a waterman, when they were both just 18. Initially, she stayed home, taking care of the




house and their four sons. But once the boys were grown, she woke with him before dawn and took to the water with him.

Wet, muddy and dirty as the work is, it comes with a massive compensation in terms of closeness to nature, and Lois continues to go to sea with her husband even at the age of 75.

This article is a summary based on an article by Lydia Woolever, on A handful of heroines work the Chesapeake Bay, that appeared first in Baltimore Magazine

(<http://www.baltimoremagazine.net/2016/7/11/waterwomen-a-handful-of-heroines-work-the-chesapeake-bay>). 

The profession of 'watermen' is a venerated one, and the exploits of the region's watermen legendary



**M**ercy is a 45-year-old fish trader in Mombasa in Kenya. She does not come from a fishing family. However, in 1996, after dropping out of school because of poverty, Mercy migrated at the age of 25 to Mombasa city and started out as a fish vendor, selling to different beach hotels in Mombasa.


Taking to fish vending was not easy for Mercy. She had very little knowledge, and had to learn the trade from male traders in the various fish landing sites. Being a Muslim woman, given the biases that Muslim women working outside the home in Kenya have

fishlanding site. There are about 74 Registered BMUs along the Kenyan coastline today. The main objectives are to ensure sustainable fishing through co-management arrangements, compliance and enforcement.

Mercy's articulation skills and sense of determination made her the representative of artisanal fishers and traders in various fisheries forums. She is a Management Committee member of the Tuna Fisheries Alliance of Kenya (TuFAK) and has been representing the Mombasa County BMU in the annual Tuna Fisheries dialogue meetings since 2013.

She is presently the elected chairperson of the Bamburi BMU. This BMU has 92 registered members, 20 of whom are women. She is also the elected vice-chairperson of the Mombasa County BMU network.

In 2013, Mercy founded Pwani Fish Marketing Association to enhance fish product development, quality assurance, value addition and marketing. Through her efforts, the members of the association and those of Bamburi's BMUs received training on fish quality assurance and cold storage facilities. They also received training on leadership, fisheries governance, policy advocacy, and a rights based approach to fisheries management.

Mercy's leadership skills and ability to engage decisionmakers in the government and private sector have yielded positive results. The County Government of Mombasa and the Kenya Commercial Bank provided fishers a grant of 60 million Kenya Shillings (USD 59,1541.2) to secure modernized fishing vessels and equipment. Further, they sponsored 112 BMU members from Mombasa County to train on various technical skills and knowledge areas at Bandari College, Mombasa. Mercy is one of them and is being trained as a boat management and maintenance technician. 

## PROFILE

### **Mercy Wasai Mghanga: Profile of a Kenyan Woman Fishworker Leader** **Chairperson of the Bamburi Beach Management Unit, Mercy works extensively on fish product development and marketing**

By **Hadley B. Becha** (becha.canco@gmail.com), Executive Director, Community Action for Nature Conservation, Kenya

to face, it was not easy to take up a trade that involved interacting a lot with 'other' men and working long hours outdoors. Her lack of skill in selecting good stock made her incur losses when she started off.

However, Mercy persisted, establishing her base at the Bamburi fish landing station in Mombasa County. Soon, Mercy became a strong advocate for the rights of artisanal fishers, both men and women, as well as for the rights of women in fish trade.

In Kenya, fish trade is controlled by Beach Management Units (BMUs). These are legal entities of fishers, fish traders, boat operators, fish processors and other beach stakeholders dependent on the fisheries sector.

The enactment of the Fisheries (Beach Management Units) Regulations of 2007 led to the establishment of BMUs in each



# Nurturing the eel

Inland fishers in The Netherlands participate in managing inland eel fisheries

By **Cornelie Quist**  
(cornelie.quist@gmail.com), Member, ICSF

**A**altje is a young woman professional inland fisher in The Netherlands. Her name means ‘little eel’ in Dutch. “I was born to become an eel fisher,” she says. “Since I was a small kid I used to go fishing with my father and learnt the skill from him. When he stopped after 30 years of fishing, I took over.” She was 24 years old then. Her two brothers had preferred other professions.

At first Aaltje’s father had not expected her to take over from him, because she was trained as a primary school teacher and loved to work with children. Aaltje says: “For me there was only one opportunity to become a professional fisher. If I did not take over from my father, our area of fishing would have to be returned to our Union of Inland Fishers to be divided among other inland fishers of our region. I did not like this idea, because my family had been fishing this water for several generations. That is why I decided to take over my father’s fishing enterprise.” Aaltje now hopes

to combine fishing with educational activities for children about inland fisheries and the aquatic ecology.

Eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*) is the most important species for inland fishers in The Netherlands, and also for Aaltje, because of both its commercial and cultural value. The eel is part of the identity of Dutch inland fishers, who call themselves eel-fishers even though they also fish other species. Aaltje

fishes alone and sometimes she is assisted by her father. She sells her eel to the auction, but her father also smokes a part of

the eel catch and sells it from home. She is a member of the Frisian Union of Inland Fishers and actively participates in a pilot project for decentralized eel management, to secure healthy eel stocks for the future.

When Aaltje’s father started fishing there were still 50 professional inland fishers in her region. Today she is one of only 14 left. This decline is a trend across the country. Inland waters constitute almost 20 per cent of the total surface of The Netherlands and the inland fishers are part of the landscape. Until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, professional inland fisheries had been a relatively large sector with a long history dating back to the early Middle Ages. Inland fisheries played an important role in the food supply of the big cities of The Netherlands as well as in the food security of the rural population. Unfortunately, there has been a rapid decline in the number of inland fishing enterprises in recent years—from around 2,300 in 1952 to just about 119 in 2015. The main causes were the reduction in eel stocks, and the many fishing restrictions for professional inland fishers. The emergence of recreational fisheries had also become a strong competition for professional fisheries.

The reasons for the decline in eel stocks are complex, and views differ widely. The European eel is found in habitats as diverse as the open ocean and sheltered coasts, large freshwater lakes and small ponds, main rivers and small streams. The eel constitutes the most widely distributed single fish stock in Europe, and is found also found across the continent and the Mediterranean parts of Africa and Asia. It is a mysterious species. It procreates in salt water and grows up in freshwater. The adult eels, also known as silver eels, swim thousands of kilometers from Europe to the Sargasso Sea (Bermuda triangle) to procreate and the baby eels, or glass eels, swim all the way back to the coast of Europe which takes about two years. (View [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBRnNk\\_uo9Y&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBRnNk_uo9Y&feature=youtu.be) to learn about the incredible life cycle of the European eel and their amazing migration.)

From the coast of Europe the baby eels try to reach freshwater systems where they can grow up. Many inland water sources in Europe have become unreachable for the eel because of the barriers created by large numbers of hydraulic engineering works such as dykes, weirs and pumping stations, constructed for coastal protection and reclamation of land. For many years, professional inland fishers

WIM ZAALMINK



“Since I was a small kid I used to go fishing with my father and learnt the skill from him. When he stopped after 30 years of fishing, I took over,” says Aaltje. Here she is seen emptying her fykes



practiced restocking of glass eel and elvers, and it is because of these traditional practices that the eel stocks were maintained in many inland waters. The fishers bought the glass eel from French or British glass eel fishers. However with the emergence of eel farming in Europe, and later also in South East Asia, mainly China, the price of glass eel and elvers in the world market increased significantly. This affected the capability of professional inland fishers to invest in restocking their fishing waters. Glass eel catches, however, appear set to recover in recent years.

Another problem is that many inland waters also have become unsuitable as habitat for the eel. The major causes are industrialization and urbanization. These resulted in a reduction of inland water due to land reclamation, and also high levels of water pollution. In April 2011, a ban on eel fishing in the large rivers of The Netherlands was imposed as a result of the European standards for dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The fishing ban on the rivers forced several economically healthy enterprises, some that had existed for generations, to stop their fishing activities.

Fishing restrictions multiplied over the years as a result of regulations and directives coming from the European Union, in particular the Water Framework Directive, the Protection of Wildlife and Ecosystems Directive, and the Eel Management Regulation (2009). The latter also implied a ban on eel fishing in The Netherlands during the three most important eel fishing months when the adult eels start migrating. These restrictions also contributed to the decline of professional inland fisheries.

Finally, the emergence of recreational fisheries also contributed to the decline in professional fisheries. After World War II, angling became an important leisure activity, while professional inland fisheries lost economic importance. In The Netherlands, the number of recreational fishers increased from 60,000 in 1952 and to around a million in 2013-14. Through their organizations, they succeeded in accumulating fishing rights and expanding their fishing area at the cost of the professional inland fishers. Conflicts of interest between professional inland fishers and recreational fishers strongly influenced the Dutch government policy on inland fisheries, with priority given to recreational fisheries over the interests of professional inland fishers. Around 80 per cent of the country's inland waters is owned by the state, while the other 20 per cent is owned by provincial and local governments, who lease out

fishing rights for these waters to professional and recreational fishers. As a result of a shift in priorities, the Dutch government decided to split the fishing rights, allocating it for eel to professional fishers, while allocating fishing rights for other species to recreational fishers. The professional inland fishers therefore became practically fully dependent on the capture of eel, and with the reduction of eel fisheries their livelihood came under serious threat.

The existing leasehold system also resulted in a process of fragmentation of inland fishing waters with most holdings becoming too small to provide sufficient livelihood to a professional fisher's household. The system changed further with the introduction of a new definition of professional inland fishers in the Dutch Fishery Act in 2008. The Act only recognized those fishers with a fishing area of a minimum of 250 hectares and a minimum yearly gross income of Euro 8,500 (USD 9,515.1) from fishing. Fishers who could not prove these requirements lost their fishing rights, and their fishing area was redistributed to other professional fishers or recreational fisheries.

Aaltje's father was one of the lucky professional eel fishers in The Netherlands who had survived these changes. It is now up to Aaltje to continue the generations old fishing enterprise. The inland waters of her region, the province of Friesland in the north of The Netherlands, are still a healthy habitat for the eel. The fishers of her region are well organized and have managed the fish stocks for generations. Thanks to the effort of their Frisian Union of Inland Fishers, founded in 1891, they are participants in a pilot project for decentralized eel management. While eel fishers in the rest of the country are confronted with a ban on eel fishing during the best fishing season, the eel fishers who are part of the pilot project are allowed to fish the whole year round. They have a yearly quota for eel which is controlled by their Union. The total quota for the region is fixed on the basis of data provided by the fishers and in collaboration with scientists, and then divided among the Union members on commonly agreed principles.

After pulling her fykes out of the water, Aaltje makes an estimation of her total catch of the day: "About two kilos", she says and sends the information over mobile telephone to NatuurNetwerk ([www.natuurnetwerk.nl](http://www.natuurnetwerk.nl)), the organization that collects the data and oversees the quota. The data is used to monitor the impact of the eel management measures. Back home, Aaltje measures all the eels she has harvested and kept alive in a corf. She finds

**"People need to understand that without paying a fair price to us small scale producers, we will not be able to survive and take care of the inland waters' fish resources, and in particular of our eel"**

about half of them are shorter than 40 cm, and releases them back in the water, and also reports this to NatuurNetwerk. The bigger eels she keeps for sale. As Aaltje remarks, “The bigger ones fetch a better price, so why should I not give the small ones a chance to grow big, and also a chance to migrate to their spawning grounds?” Aaltje also practises restocking of eels in her area of water, by releasing baby eels which she buys through the Union. She adds, “I am responsible for my own area where I have exclusive fishing rights and that is why I feel encouraged to also invest in it. We only have eel fishing rights—the fishing rights for other species are allocated to the recreational fisher organizations. But because we collaborate with them in a fishery management plan, they allow us to keep some of the by-catch of commercial value, and this provides a welcome additional income. But it is sad that with the splitting of the fishing rights by the government, we have become dependent on the attitude of the leadership of the recreational fisheries organizations for a share of the fish stocks.”

The Frisian Union of Inland fishers actively participates in various eel management projects with the recreational fisher organizations, eel farmers, the Water Management Board, scientists and the provincial government. These projects engage in data collection and eel stock monitoring;

eel restocking in healthy habitats; an eel reserve; and a catch, transfer and release project for silver, or adult, eels to help them migrate to their spawning grounds. “Only by collaboration can we really achieve some real impact,” says Aaltje. “And in this way we also win respect from society. We inland fishers have become marginalized, and the people of our country hardly know of our existence and work. We have to defend ourselves against propaganda of environmentalists who portray fishers as the biggest culprits of declining fish stocks. This could be the case in some areas, but here in Friesland we have fished for many generations in a sustainable way. Our Union has played an important role in this. We have built good ecological knowledge which has proven to be useful in the monitoring and management of fish stocks. Now we also are in contact with organizations like Slow Food and they are very interested in our artisanal fish products and traditional practices. Hopefully they will help us in educating the consumers and also the restaurants. Restaurants still often buy cheap, imported fish or illegally caught fish because they do not want to pay us a fair price. People need to understand that without paying a fair price to us small-scale producers, we will not be able to survive and take care of the inland waters’ fish resources, and in particular of our eel.” ❏

## Gender inequality: GAF6 asks ‘WHY?’

The recently concluded 6th Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries addressed the question of gender in very significant ways

By **Meryl Williams**, MerylJWilliams@gmail.com, Co-Chair GAF6 Organising Committee; **Katia Frangoudes**, katia.frangoudes@univ-brest.fr, University of Brest, France; **Arlene Satapornvanit**, arlene.satapornvanit@oceans-partnership.org, Gender Specialist at the USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership; and **Nikita Gopal**, nikiajith@gmail.com, Chair GAF6 Programme Committee

The 6th Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF6) was held in Bangkok, Thailand, over four days (3-6 August 2016) of intense engagement. It began with a half day Training Workshop—GAF-101: Theorizing Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Research—involving more than 50 new and experienced gender researchers. Workshop leaders Marilyn Porter and Holly Hapke set out to demystify theory. “Theory,” they said, “encourages us to ask, and keep asking, the question ‘WHY?’”

This set the tone for GAF6, which was the most successful of all the women/gender events held by the Asian Fisheries Society over the last 18 years. Moreover, GAF6 was a major

component of the 11th Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum (11AFAF), the first time an event on the question of gender has achieved such prominence in a mainstream fisheries conference. GAF6 attracted the most Forum presentations: 68 oral presentations, summaries of posters as well as posters, and an overview presented at the Forum’s Closing Plenary.

This report organizes selected GAF6 presentations under four themes: policy opportunities and implementation challenges; challenging social and fish sector norms; definitions and filters that exclude; and the impacts of current sector trends.

In the context of the first theme—new gender equality policy opportunities and their implementation—one of the most promising policy opportunities is in the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security



Siri Gerrard and Katia Frangouides during discussion on SSF Guidelines at GAF6. The workshop examined the SSF Guidelines through a feminist lens and identified through case studies the main barriers as well as challenges

and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). The GAF6 Special Session on the implementation of the gender elements of the Guidelines had two objectives: first, to examine the Guidelines through a feminist lens; and second, to identify through case studies the main barriers as well as challenges the best approaches for a successful implementation of gender equity and equality.

Katia Frangouides' presentation dealt with the inclusion of gender in the Guidelines and emphasized that implementation is the next critical step. In implementation, examples from different regions are important to bring out information about barriers, opportunities and challenges to gender equality, including norms and values that may prevent it. The ensuing presentations provided more such information from different geographical areas. All presentations spoke about the difficulties women experience in participating in the decisionmaking processes.

Lack of statistics was identified as one of the reasons for the absence of gender-sensitive policies. In addition, for the Caribbean, Nadine Nembhard identified the lack of gender mainstreaming in several national fisheries and aquaculture policies, as well as the limited capacity of the national gender agencies to monitor, report on, and implement strategies.

Now, however, several regional agencies believe that implementing the Guidelines will lead to women's empowerment and capacity building. Within the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO), a 'fisherwomen' section has been created and, together, CNFO, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) aim to get a protocol on the SSF Guidelines, including gender, into fisheries policy.

Kumi Soejima reported that in Japan, women have their own sections within Fisheries Cooperative Associations (FCAs). These deal with all social matters related to the community and the fishery sector, but women are not allowed to become full members of the sections that are empowered to discuss fishery management and the future of the community, or run the banking system. Fishermen claim that women cannot become members of the FCAs because "they are not participating in harvesting activities". Logically speaking, one might expect that women divers (*ama*) who harvest abalone would qualify for full membership of the FCAs, but this is not the case because their right of access is granted by their husbands as members of the FCA. This status quo, however, is being challenged





GAF6 Meeting at Bangkok, Thailand. GAF6 participants emphasized that fisheries and aquaculture should be defined by reference to the whole of the value chain

by fisherwomen who have benefited from national schemes to develop their business capacities by establishing private or collective units to process fish products, and who demand to be completely involved in the fisheries organizations. For the time being, fishermen have not fully opened the door, and only women struggling against male power have been successful. Women generally need support from scientists, prefectural and national fisheries authorities to force their way into the FCA.

Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk explained that, in Thailand, women are participating actively in small-scale fisheries, but national statistics are not sex-desegregated and the needs of women are therefore not taken into account during policy formulation. NGOs that work for the recognition of small-scale fisheries communities and gender equality, promoting and supporting the active involvement of women fishers in national policy development and concrete local initiatives, view the Guidelines as an important tool. They have used the Guidelines framework to conduct a national consultation forum in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries and representatives of provincial level small-scale fishing communities. A national implementation plan for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries has been drafted and is expected to direct future actions of NGOs and civil society organizations.

In spite of what is proclaimed in government gender policy, gender equality strategies frequently are not implemented. Why does this failure occur? In 2003, the government of Lao PDR promoted gender equity as a priority and established the National Commission for Advancement of Women (NCAW). Dongdavanh Sibounthong

examined how national gender equity policy was being implemented locally in fisheries and aquaculture in Pakse and Phonthong districts, where district plans promote gender equality and the inclusion of women in decisionmaking. At the grassroots, however, Dongdavanh found traditional gender divisions of labour in fish value chains. Further, in the district agriculture and forestry offices, there were few women staff, few prospects of promotions, and no funds to advance gender plans. NCAW also lacked the capacity to provide assistance to sector ministries and district level offices.

Roel Bosma found that sectoral Gender Action Plans (GAP) in Vietnam had not reduced gender inequality in aquaculture and fisheries. These plans did not address the constraints to gender equality, including the attitudes of men and families, and Roel concluded that “the struggle for gender equality will be a continuous struggle”.

Natasha Stacey and colleagues reviewed Indonesian aid, and government and NGO livelihood projects in the last two decades. Most projects performed little gender analysis, did not follow through on planned gender activities and did not measure gendered impacts. As a result, no strategies yet exist to support women, who, as Anindya Indira Putri found, were suffering greater burdens in their triple roles (productive, reproductive and community), especially if men migrated to work following resource and coastal degradation due to climate change and other factors.

One new project taking gender equality to heart is the USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership, according to Arlene Satapornvanit, who explained how the Partnership embeds gender policy and

strategies. For example, as part of its Asia-Pacific work to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud, the Partnership is strengthening the human well-being component by including gender tools and case studies in its Catch Documentation and Traceability system.

Related to implementation struggles, the second theme was about social and fish sector norms that present a major constraint to gender equality.

Afrina Choudhury, from Bangladesh examined whether women in homestead pond aquaculture and shrimp processing factories were empowered by their engagement in aquaculture. Both activities have attracted many poor women, and they reported modest improvements in their empowerment, measured at multiple scales. The study concluded, however, that we cannot assume that inclusion leads to empowerment, especially because household and factory attitudes and strictures on women constrain them into conforming to their existing gender roles. Will empowerment be sustainable or even possible without normative change?

Integrating women into decisionmaking in the governance of fisheries in Kiribati faces hurdles, according to Aurelie Delisle. The country was trying to implement a new mode of co-governance which called for equal participation for all user groups. Although paying particular attention to women's involvement at all stages, participation has not materialized because cultural norms, traditional governance structures and the gender-blindness of fisheries authorities impede change. In another presentation from the Pacific, Helen Teioli made a strong case that, to succeed, gender transformative processes in Solomon Islands need to engage men as well as women. Ignoring men in the transformative processes overlooked gender differences such that Western Province women tended to lead changes and more innovative activities than men, whilst Malaita men tended to innovate more than women.

Long-term changes in perceptions will only happen if awareness on gender starts early. In schools, art is one medium that might help. At GAF6, a 'Youth and Fish' painting competition for students was held. Opening the event, Arlene Nietes Satapornvanit said "we should start our advocacy about gender awareness and sensitivity at a young age, so that these concepts will be incorporated into youth mindsets and be carried into adulthood

as a lifestyle". The Youth and Fish Session was a pilot activity involving senior and junior Bangkok high schools, with students working in pairs. The artworks revealed concern for the environment and people.

The third theme was about why definitions and filters may exclude or render invisible fish value chain participants.

For a start, individuals and groups are deliberately or incidentally excluded when informal and invisible work is not counted in national statistics and when fishing is too narrowly defined, for example, when practices such as gathering and gleaning are not considered to constitute "fishing". Jennifer Gee of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported how statistical exclusion, including that based on gender, is being addressed. FAO is now reporting the limited available sex-disaggregated national data and has published new guidelines on census and sample survey methods for collecting socio-economic data. Efforts are underway to find ways to integrate project-based data, often the only data available, into national data.

Throughout, GAF6 participants emphasized that fisheries and aquaculture should be defined by reference to the whole of the value chain, and not simply to production, as is currently being done. Considering the entire value chain reveals a greater number of women and a greater diversity of people who depend on fish, often in ways that are not envisaged by planners.

In the production nodes of the value chain, narrow definitions of fishing exclude many small-scale operators. Most commonly excluded is inshore gathering, mainly of invertebrates. In Costa Rica, fishers both women and men feel that though they work with dignity, their labour, primarily due to the particular conditions of the work and the associated lack of resources, goes unrecognized, keeping them in poverty. Along the Pacific coast, 7000 mollusc gatherers, mainly women and families working in the mangroves, have been trapped by laws that prohibit their work unless the status of the fished stocks is known. This seemingly hopeless situation has started to turn around. One group managed to meet with the President of Costa Rica, and began to organize themselves. With the help of the local NGO, CoopeSoliDar R.L., and the FAO, they started to work with the government to resolve the dilemma, using a human rights approach and participatory stock assessments,

**"...the struggle for gender equality will be a continuous struggle"**

leading to sustainable use of the resource. Under the umbrella of the SSF Guidelines, this action is aimed at creating decent work with dignity, as defined by the Guidelines.

For Mozambique fisheries, Horacio Gervásio asked why substantial subsistence fishing by women and men is not better integrated into local food systems. Under the new 2013 fisheries law, it is defined as non-commercial and secondary, even though it contributes to the fishers' incomes and supplies local hotels and elites. Intertidal fishing should be formalised, he contended, and women encouraged to apply the business skills they use to balance their portfolios of livelihood strategies.

Formal and official conceptions of gender and place in fish value chains that seem to be exclusionary may in practice be circumvented. Ray Pavo studied why some women managed to work successfully in the overtly masculine tuna port in General Santos City, Philippines. He found that a few women prospered in their own business spaces, which they perceived quite differently from the way these spaces were conceived by planners of the value chain nodes.

In Davao Oriental, Philippines, Jecelyn Pastor interviewed women who have been fishing offshore for many years and some who were involved in barter trade for fish products from the deep sea vessels, despite taboos about women bringing bad luck to deep sea fishing. She found that, due to such prejudices, women are invariably excluded when considering deep sea fishing, even though they may be active fishers.

The fourth theme covered the gendered impacts of current sector concerns, namely labour conditions, illegal fishing, trade concentration, and fishing community disruption.

The labour conditions under which women in the fish sector work have received little public attention and are barely visible in NGO exposures of human trafficking and migrant labour exploitation. The GAF6 Special Session on the fish industry, gender and social development encouraged participants to share experiences and perceptions of how women are affected. One of the presentations in this session, by Mohammad Nuruzzaman, described the factory provisions for occupational safety and health among female shrimp factory workers in Bangladesh.

The panel discussion captured practices/experiences (or the lack thereof) linked with

social responsibility and development. Marie Christine Monfort, a seafood marketing consultant based in Europe, noted the absence of women in the majority of high level decision-making positions in seafood companies, as well as in conferences and meetings. Thai business development worker, Supaporn Anuchiracheeva, shared how participatory interventions empowered the women in a fishing community in southern Thailand to improve fishing practices, post-harvest, marketing, and business negotiations. The women's status has been elevated and they are now supplying seafood with international certification to five-star hotels in Bangkok. Based on her experience in the International Labour Organization, Anna Olsen recommended that gender and intersectional analyses are essential in activities to create decent work in fishing and seafood processing.

This session stressed that concerted work with the seafood industry and development agencies is needed to raise awareness and build up capacity to achieve gender equality, as this is not yet on the agenda.

The international media has been filled with stories of importing states cracking down on illegal fishing, but few carry the voices of those affected. Since 2015, Thai fishers, their households, communities and life options have been roiled by new trade threats from importing regions, especially the European Union's 'Yellow Card' on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and the consequent Thailand's 2015 Royal Enactment on Fishing. Khamnuan Kheuntha from Thailand, examined why the fishers are experiencing seemingly constant stress and asked, "is this stress due to more than the new regulations?"

Chalermwan Wichakoon, a young woman CEO of a Thai fishing company shared her perceptions on the current situation facing the fishing industry in the fight against IUU fishing. The voices of the fishing company owners are not heard and their opinions were not asked regarding media reports. This has affected their businesses to the extent that the younger generation who inherited the businesses from their parents and grandparents—and especially she as a female, are now thinking of giving up the fishing business.

Negatively and positively, fish trade and its growth impacts women. Nikita Gopal described how, in coastal areas of India, women in fish marketing are being pushed out by



resource rich traders who have entered the scene in many states. NGOs are helping the affected women to organize and raise awareness of their situation but, at the same time, state led interventions and schemes are also being made to explore livelihoods within and outside fisheries. The efficacy of these strategies is yet to be explored.

Current fish trade trends are not all negative, as Amonrat Sermwatanakul showed with a good news story about Thailand's Siamese fighting fish industry. After 30 years of traditional extension experience in Thailand, Amonrat discovered the power of branding and social media to help the second generation of growers of these ornamental and sporting fish. Many growers are women—for example, in Nakhon Pathom Province near Bangkok where half the growers are women. Using Facebook and group training, she has helped connect producers with each other and thousands of buyers, and provides training to women farmer groups in branding, product photography, as well as in online marketing to local and global aquarium fish markets through such sites as AquaBid.

Even in an equal opportunity country like Norway, where fish production is an important economic sector, fisheries management changes have disrupted fishing communities in gendered ways. Siri Gerrard explained how, in 1990, many contributions by women to fisheries were not valued and thus were not considered in the major privatisation of the fisheries. Women ended up owning little of the capital that was created by way of quotas, and although they continue to contribute, they do so in invisible ways and by bringing in household income from their work in other sectors.

Migrations often disrupt fishing communities. Kyoko Kusakabe explored why migration is now a pervasive feature of Cambodian coastal and inland fisheries. Rather than caused by simple economics, she found migration patterns were shaped by complex interactions of many factors, including gender, age, identity, resource depletion and alternative opportunities.

New coastal developments, including aquaculture, affect coastal communities. Benedict Carmelita examined women and men's attitudes towards new government-promoted mariculture parks in Misamis Oriental, Misamis Occidental, Bohol, La Union and Pangasinan Provinces, Philippines. In most, but not all areas, proportionally more men than women like



Nadine Nembhard identified the lack of gender mainstreaming in several national fisheries and aquaculture policies in the Caribbean countries

having mariculture operations nearby, but non-fishing households tend to be more favourably disposed towards having mariculture operations nearby than did fishing households. After mariculture was established, fishing, gleaning and leisure activities, including swimming and strolling, decreased. Local employment was perceived to have improved because of mariculture operations.

What is the impact of GAF6 likely to be? We quote Peter Wessels: "I have now returned to the Maldives after the GAF6 conference with a renewed energy. Based on what I observed at GAF6 and through my own research, I am confident that momentum is building." ❏

# The climate for change!

**A recently held global conference underscored the importance of including gender considerations in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies**

By **Meryl Williams**,  
MerylJWilliams@gmail.com, Co-Chair GAF6  
Organising Committee,  
**Angela Lentisco**, angie.lentisco@gmail.com,  
Gender Special Session  
Organiser, FishAdapt

Climate change is already affecting people in many environments, as reported at GAF6 (see article 'Gender inequality: GAF6 asks "WHY?") and in the FAO FishAdapt: Global Conference on Climate Change Adaptation for Fisheries and Aquaculture (8-10 August 2016). The GAF6 session on climate change and disaster preparedness, and previous GAF findings, were communicated at FishAdapt and built on by additional presentations and discussions in a Special Session. FishAdapt could be the launch pad for a discourse on gender and climate adaptation work in fisheries and aquaculture.

Beginning in 2007, the Global Symposia on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF) began to focus on climate change, disaster recovery and relief as a theme, producing a modest but important set of studies. The results of these studies are showing that a gender lens brings deeper understanding of climate and disaster adaptation; that flexibility, versatility and agency are keys to resilience; and that gender-blind responses should always be challenged.

Presentations and discussions in Bangkok stressed that climate change adaptation is deeply interconnected with other women's issues: for example, when women are expected

to engage in sex with fishers or fish traders to secure fish for sale or processing; the spread of HIV; or the issue of rights and social protection for women and men along the value chain. Despite these linkages, the research on women in fisheries and aquaculture vis-à-vis climate change is very limited.

Marieta Bañez Sumagaysay described how women in Leyte, Philippines, asserted their agency through embracing the fish value chain in post-disaster livelihood intervention following the devastating 2013 Typhoon Haiyan. Women's groups, once formed, were able to "build back better", bringing all parties together, including donors. They created new, value added soft bone milkfish products with longer shelf life and lower labour costs.

Following disasters, flexibility in income options for women and men seems to improve household and community resilience. A study led by B. Shanthi in Tamil Nadu found that, after losing their fishing livelihoods in the 2004 tsunami, many men migrated for work, leaving women to head the households. Researchers, NGOs and others successfully introduced brackish water aquaculture to the women to diversify their livelihoods, but few local opportunities were available for the men.

Flexibility and agency rely on perceptions, attitudes and emotions. At GAF6, Louis Lebel reported that the attitudes of Thai inland fish farmers towards climate risk were not strongly gendered, but their emotions were. Farmers' decisions were not made just on analytical logic but emotions were also brought to bear. From a survey of perceptions of climate change by women and men engaged in reservoir fisheries in the state of Karnataka, India, at FishAdapt, Arpita Sharma reported finding no significant gender differences, although women did perceive that livelihoods would experience a greater change than did the men. Women in these fisheries have more limited access to power and assets and reported greater financial dependency than men.

Gender-blindness in approaches to adaptation starts from a lack of gender measures in climate change vulnerability assessments and climate change National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Speakers at FishAdapt explained that the assessments are used to find the vulnerability of people, human activities, places, and the ranking of countries that determine priorities for action.

ANGELA LENTISCO



GAF6 workshop stressed that the gender lens should be used at all stages of the National Adaptation Plans and climate change projects, from design to implementation and impact assessment

Yet, methodological choices have a large impact on rankings. GAF experts and climate change adaptation experts need to work together to put the gender dimension as an integral part of the vulnerability assessments and of the NAPs.

Standard gender-blind responses to climate emergencies should always be challenged. Mary Barby Badayos-Jover found that “every time people come here to give aid, they give boats! What about aid specifically for women?” Her presentation and those of others at GAF6, which come in the context of a post-Typhoon Haiyan Philippines, painted a more complex picture than most relief agencies might comprehend. Following Typhoon Haiyan, also known as Super-Typhoon Yolanda, which struck the Philippines in 2013, women in Bayas village, Visayas, formed a women’s association and were able to secure a boat to use for transport and also rent out. Although donations of boats to fishermen following a coastal disaster are now formulaic, this action is viewed as having greater legitimacy. Hanny Mediodia’s studies showed that households lost proportionately more income from fisheries than from other household activities.

The lively FishAdapt Special Session titled ‘Integrating Gender Considerations into Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction for Fishing Communities’ stressed that the gender lens should be used at all stages of the National Adaptation Plans and climate change projects, from design to implementation and impact assessment. The ‘Too Big To Ignore’ Special Session linked this to the need for gender training modules to enhance the ability of decisionmakers to identify the specific needs of women. To move forward, gender champions must be identified, developed and capacitated. The fisherwoman should also be brought to the table for others to hear her voice. ❏

## Interview with Cao Thi Thien, Chairwoman of Hoang Phong Commune Women’s Union, Vietnam

By **Nguyen Thu Trang** (nguyentrang1512@gmail.com), Centre for Supporting Green Development-GreenHub

### Can you tell us something about your organization?

Our organization, the Hoang Phong Commune Women’s Union, is an aquaculture association. We have about 100 members who support each other in terms of sharing experience, culture techniques and product output. We are based in Hoang Phong, which is in Hoang Hoa district in the Thanh Hoa province of Vietnam’s central coast. We have approximately 255 hectares for aquaculture, and, in line with the government’s aim of increasing the efficiency of prawn farming through diversification, we use 138 hectares of the land to rotate crops and practice multi-cropping.

### What changes have taken place in aquaculture in your province?

Earlier, shrimp farming required large investments. You needed to invest anywhere between 30 million dong (USD 1,345.2 ) to 90 million dong (USD 4,035.6 ) per hectare depending on the type of shrimp farm you were setting up—improved farm, semi-intensive, or industrial aquaculture. Then, you needed further resources to look after the farm and prevent disease outbreaks. At the end of the harvest, you would barely recover your costs. Today, with the support of local extension services, we exploit the advantages of tidal saltwater and brackish water for diversified aquaculture, which means cultivating a number of species and rotating multiple crops seasonally. So, in a farm where prawns and crabs are the main species, you could also expect to find nipper shrimp, fish and seaweeds, and towards the end of the farming cycle, you might find tilapia in ponds to secure an income during the stormy season. This way, households are making more profits. In the case of my own household, we have secured an approximately 15 per cent increase in profit margin from multi-rotation crops.

### What are the main challenges you face?

Aquaculture is vulnerable to certain problems, mainly erratic climate variations. For women, aquaculture also means an increased workload. It can be successfully pursued only if the work is shared between husband and wife. Husbands need to take up farming and domestic work responsibilities, especially if the woman’s health or family situation is poor, or if the production process is challenging and laborious as is most often the case. Although I myself have had the good fortune of getting funds for production and also access to training and capacity development, most women still lack these opportunities. We need education, credit and loan services; training for decision making skills; and a voice in development policies and planning. Further, our local and national authorities should undergo gender-awareness training. ❏

## YEMAYA MAMA



## “The Fish Value Chain!”



DOCUMENT

# El Rol De La Mujer En La Pesca Y La Acuicultura En Chile, Colombia, Paraguay Y Perú Integración, Sistematización Y Análisis De Estudios Nacionales Informe Final

Cecilia Godoy A. (Chile), Hermes Orlando Mojica Benítez (Colombia), Viviana María Ríos Morinigo (Paraguay), and David H. Mendoza Ramírez (Perú). Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Santiago de Chile. 2016. Pg 38. Language: Spanish

This review is by **Vivienne Solis** (vsolis@coope solidar.org), Member, ICSF

This year, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) released a study conducted across four Latin American countries—Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru—on the role of women in fisheries and aquaculture. The study titled ‘*El Rol De La Mujer En La Pesca Y La Acuicultura En Chile, Colombia, Paraguay Y Perú Integración, Sistematización Y Análisis De Estudios Nacionales Informe Final*’ reveals that women in these countries account for about 50 per cent of all those employed in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, and engage in diverse activities throughout the value chain, assuming key roles in work related to harvesting, primary or secondary processing, and marketing.

FAO, as one of the primary organizations behind the drafting of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) has fully supported the inclusion of equity and gender equality as guiding principles in the document. It has also promoted specific measures aimed at accelerating the de facto equality between men and women through preferential treatment aimed at equitable outcomes.

In this context, through the period 2014 to early 2015, FAO supported the organization, systematization and analysis of four studies in Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru. These studies shed light on the status and conditions of women in fisheries and aquaculture in Latin America, and propose policy recommendations aimed at improving the quality of life of women, while increasing their contribution to food security and the growth of the sector.

The case studies support a large number of important findings that would help determine the focus areas for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Chiefly, the studies found that women in fisheries and aquaculture are a workforce whose numerical and qualitative importance is not adequately reflected in the available statistical information. They found that the data on the participation of women would be made richer if further analysed on the basis of sub-sector (fisheries and aquaculture), place (marine or continental), type of enterprise (craft or business), providing thus, a more precise and refined picture of women’s participation.

The studies found that most of the women worked outside the parameters of decent work developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The lack of information on sectoral policies, on implementation mechanisms, and on financial and non-financial services available to enhance the conditions of women’s work, emerged as real obstacles to the economic empowerment of women.

The studies also determined that the low degree of organized representation among women primarily in the fisheries sector is a significant constraint that requires immediate attention. ❏



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27 College Road  
Chennai 600 006  
India  
Tel: (91) 44 2827 5303  
Fax: (91) 44 2825 4457  
E-mail: icsf@icsf.net

Web site: www.icsf.net

EDITED BY  
Nilanjana Biswas

ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
Sandesh  
(sandeshcartoonist@gmail.com)

DESIGNED BY  
P. Sivasakthivel

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.