



Project Report: AAS-2013-22

## Livelihoods, markets, and gender roles in Solomon Islands: case studies from Western and Isabel Provinces



RESEARCH  
PROGRAM ON  
Aquatic  
Agricultural  
Systems

# Livelihoods, markets, and gender roles in Solomon Islands: case studies from Western and Isabel Provinces

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## Citation

Kruijssen, F., Albert, J.A., Morgan, M., Boso, D., Siota, F., Sibiti, S., and Schwarz, A.J. (2013). Livelihoods, markets, and gender roles in Solomon Islands: case studies from Western and Isabel Provinces. CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Penang, Malaysia. Project Report: AAS-2013-22.

## Acknowledgment

The authors gratefully acknowledge all our key informants in the two study sites who were interviewed, participated in focus groups, or contributed in any other way, for spending their valuable time to assist us to carry out the study described in this brief. We are also grateful for helpful comments received from Ranjitha Puskur. This project was funded by New Zealand through the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) Programme.



## Key messages

Livelihoods in Solomon Islands are diverse, composed of a wide range of activities. The marketing of marine resources through value chains is an important component of this livelihood portfolio in many parts of the country. Gendered analysis of marine resource value chains can identify key entry points for equitable improvement of the livelihoods of those participating in these value chains. Case studies of two Solomon Islands communities (one each from Western and Isabel Provinces) provide insight into this issue. Some of the main findings of the value chain study, conducted in 2012, are as follows:

- Men and women fulfill different roles in marine resource value chains. Men are more involved in reef fishing and use a higher number of different fishing methods, while women more often participate in gleaning of other marine resources. Selling fish is more often done by men, while women may dominate the sales of other marine resources, although this depends on the cultural context.
- At the production level (fishing and gleaning), control over income derived from marine resources is most often with the person who is involved in the sales transaction. Thus women's access to financial compensation for their work is linked to their capabilities to bargain with other value chain actors, and this process is shaped by gender norms and power relations. In the case study in Isabel Province, income from fish is more equally divided between husband and wife than income from other marine resources.
- The number of livelihood activities pursued differs between the two communities, but is almost equal for men and women within them. Some activities are more commonly conducted by one of the sexes, but specific division of roles differs between the two case study communities and is dependent on local norms and customs.
- There is a gender-differentiated pattern of decision-making for decisions related to the daily functioning of the household, economic activities, and the family, with some decisions being made by either men or women alone, while others are made jointly. At the community level, however, men tend to dominate decision-making processes. It is posited that women's participation in decision-making will be enhanced by addressing underlying gender norms as well as improving the skills and capabilities of women.

## Key recommendations

- When assessing and intervening in marine resource-based livelihoods, it is essential to go beyond identifying the visible differences and to attempt to explain the underlying causes of these disparities.
- Improving the equity of gender and decision-making would need to include building capacity and knowledge of women to be able to contribute to decision-making processes; for example, increasing skills, as well as addressing underlying gender norms influencing both men's and women's roles and responsibilities.
- There are several potential entry points for upgrading marine resource value chains, including exploration of different models of coordination and collective effort among fishers and gleaners, especially for women, and provision of training and awareness on alternative processing options to improve fish and shellfish preservation in order to reduce wastage and increase shelf-life.

A key area for further research is how the performance of marine resource value chains can be improved without increasing pressure on the ecosystems that provide the products marketed through them.



Small-scale fisheries are an important component of the AAS



Pelagic fish being sold in Honiara central market

## Introduction

In Solomon Islands, the use of sea and land resources referred to here as aquatic agricultural systems (AAS) shape the livelihood choices and opportunities available to rural people and communities that rely on them (Box 1).

**Box 1.** *Aquatic agricultural systems (AAS)* are farming, fishing, and livestock systems where the annual production dynamics of freshwater and/or coastal ecosystems contribute significantly to total household income.

A diverse range of livelihood activities exists in Solomon Islands. One of the livelihood opportunities is the cash income and goods derived from selling or bartering aquatic agricultural resources through participation in markets. The term “value chain” is often used to describe the activities involved in getting a product from production or collection through different stages of processing and marketing to the final consumer. Value chain analysis aims to understand the actors involved in this chain, the inputs and services provided to chain actors, and the enabling environment of the chain, consisting of policies, rules, and regulations, including informal rules and cultural norms. Usually a value chain analysis is carried out to assess constraints in how well the value chain functions and to identify potential opportunities to improve it. These improvements could be related to the efficiency of how a product is traded between different actors in the chain, equity between value chain actors in terms of income earned from participation in the chain, or the improved participation of specific vulnerable groups of the population; for example, better participation of women.

**Box 2.** *Gender* refers to the socially constructed roles ascribed to males and females and is something that infuses all aspects of daily life. This means that gender affects how women and men conceive of themselves and their capabilities; how women and men interact within the framework of social expectations; and how opportunities are structured and resources distributed within institutions like the market and the state.

Gender-ascribed roles define the “ideal expected behaviors for men and women in any position they occupy in society or in any activity, overlapping with other expected role behavior. In other words, gender roles define what is deemed appropriate for women and men, and define what attributes men and women should have and display in any situation. As such, gender roles are norms that women and men comply with all the time, whether in the household or the street, in private or in public” (Muñoz Boudet et al. 2013).

Globally, women form at least half of the labor force in agricultural production and natural resource use, but often their role is poorly recognized. Better inclusion of women in value chains will

improve equity and social justice, full participation of women in the economy will contribute to more economic development, and improved gender equity will result in higher efficiency and productivity because resources such as inputs and services can be used more efficiently and effectively if better targeted towards women (KIT, Agri-ProFocus & IIRR 2012). It has been estimated that improving gender equity in agriculture could increase women’s yields on their farms by 20–30 percent, which could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 percent (FAO 2011).

**Box 3.** *Some gender-related facts on Solomon Islands*

- As of 2010, women’s share of the economically active population was low (38.7%), and had marginally declined since 1980 relative to men (FAO 2010, as cited in Weeratunge et al. 2012).
- In 2012, over 80% of all economically active women worked in agriculture. Over time, women’s share in the agricultural labor force has increased, while the share of women in waged employment in professional and technical jobs has fallen. This indicates that gender inequalities in non-agricultural sectors tend to benefit men rather than women.
- As of 2010, 33% of married women (15–49 years) earned their own cash incomes (ADB/SPC 2010).
- Rural female-headed households are disproportionately represented among the bottom 30% of income deciles (SI-NSO/UNDP 2008).

The purpose of putting a gender lens on value chain analysis is to understand why men and women fulfill certain roles at every level in the chain, which roles provide the most benefits, and who has the access to and control over resources to participate fully in the chain, and thereby to find entry points for improvement. This also means trying to grapple with gender norms, beliefs, and power relations underlying gender-differentiated value chain participation (see Box 5 for information that is required for a gendered value chain analysis).

**Box 4.** *Commitment to gender equality in Solomon Islands*

In Solomon Islands the importance of addressing gender inequality is reflected in the 2009 national policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development (GEWD), which focuses on improving the economic status of women through improved access to and share of productive resources and the equal participation of women and men in decision-making and leadership (MWYCA 2009). For the benefit of AAS communities specifically, in 2011 the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) developed a strategy for gender mainstreaming in fisheries.



**Figure 1.** Map of Solomon Islands.

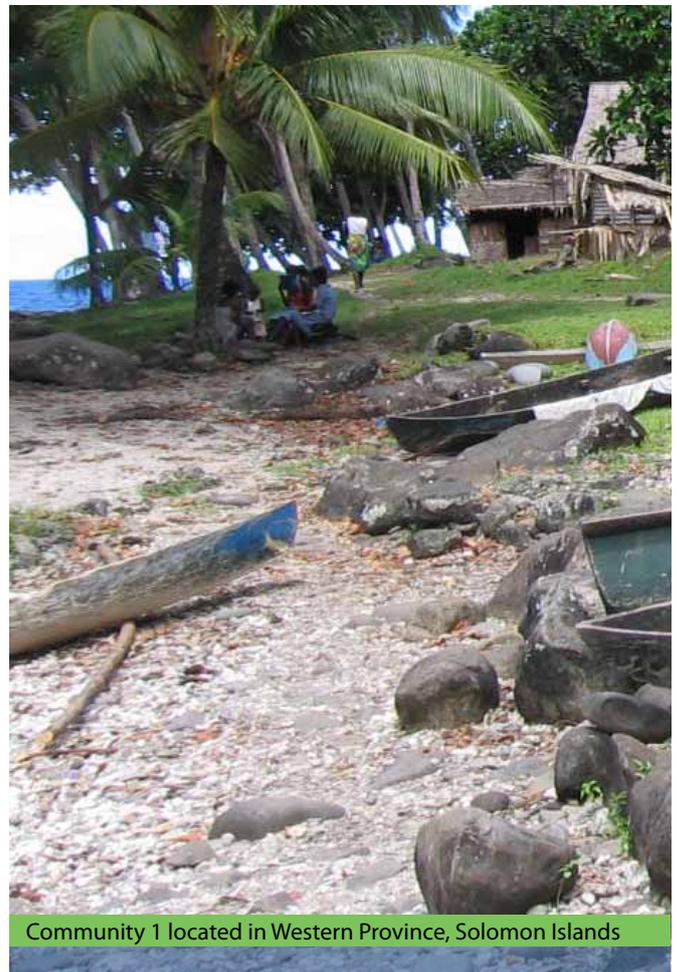
If gender dimensions are ignored, it is likely that not everyone will benefit equally from value chain upgrading, and marginalized groups could even be negatively affected by proposed changes in a value chain. This is a matter of concern not just for marginalized members of the population themselves – typically, women and girls – but also for their households, communities, and environment, all of which stand to benefit if their capabilities and opportunities are enhanced.

A second objective was to better understand the opportunities and challenges provided by one of the Fisheries Centers (an MFMR initiative to enhance fish markets). The study included key informant interviews and focus group discussions among men and women in the two communities. Topics covered included roles in livelihood activities, decision-making, value chain roles, and species caught/collected.

**Box 5.** Checklist of information needed for gendered value chain analysis

- Gender-differentiated roles and responsibilities in the value chain, especially downstream.
- Men and women's time demands and constraints, and possible tensions with new responsibilities.
- Gender-differentiated access to and control over assets, tools, and inputs and services.
- Gender-differentiated benefits derived from value chain participation.
- Underlying gender norms shaping who manages income and makes decisions in the value chain.
- How households distribute and allocate financial resources from participation in value chains.
- Range of factors influencing women's capacity to bargain in value chains.
- Other constraints and opportunities for women's improved participation in value chains.

Marine resources provide a major source of livelihood in Solomon Islands, both in terms of subsistence and for barter or cash income through marketing. In 2012, WorldFish, on behalf of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) and through the New Zealand-funded "Mekem Strong Solomon Islands Fisheries" (MSSIF) project, conducted preliminary research to begin to identify and explain the gender-differentiated roles, responsibilities, livelihood activities, and participation in value chains of men and women in two case study Solomon Islands communities: one in Western Province, and one in Isabel Province (Figure 1). This brief presents the results of these cases, focusing on fish and other marine resources marketed both locally and in Honiara. The study focused on opportunities to enhance livelihoods, especially of women and youth, and the evenness of engagement in the value chain of men and women within the same household.



Community 1 located in Western Province, Solomon Islands



Community 2 located in Isabel Province, Solomon Islands

## Key findings

### Overview of case studies

#### Community 1 (Western Province)

##### *Community context:*

- Population of about 125 people; 17 households
- Remote, only accessible by sea or foot; access worsened by seasonal rough seas
- Few stores to buy household goods and inputs

##### *Livelihood activities:*

- Diverse range of livelihood activities: within a household, 12–17 different activities undertaken
- About 12 different activities per adult household member (both men and women)
- All households involved in reef fishing, gardening, foraging, coconut oil production, and trading marine resources and crops
- Majority of households involved in tourism, migrant labor, coconut production, copra processing, and carving (handicrafts)
- On average an individual household grows 6 different crops; crop species differ across households

##### *Consumption:*

- Shellfish are only sold, not consumed, because of religious restrictions on consumption
- Households consume about 2 meals per day
- 30% of meals contain marine resources
- 20 different fish species mentioned as top 5 most commonly consumed fish

##### *Fisheries:*

- High diversity in species most commonly caught
- High seasonal variation in fish species caught and consumed

##### *Markets:*

- Fish, cassava, sweet potato, and cabbage were ranked as most important products for sales
- Fish and marine resource marketing take place mainly at intra-and inter-village level
- No ice available and limited transport opportunities
- Key constraints: limitations in processing options and storage, limited market access

#### Community 2 (Isabel Province)

##### *Community context:*

- Population of about 3000 people; 420 households
- Better accessibility; on a shipping company's route
- Several local stores for household goods and inputs

##### *Livelihood activities:*

- Diverse range of livelihood activities: within a household 6–15 different activities undertaken
- About 8 different activities per adult household member (both men and women)
- All households involved in reef fishing, collection of other marine resources, and agriculture
- More than 75% of households participate in foraging,

fish/marine resources marketing, coconut oil production, and tourism

- Home consumption and giving away more frequent uses of marine resources than marketing
- 21 different crops listed; sweet potato, cassava, and cabbage most frequently cultivated
- Individual household grows about 6 different crops

##### *Consumption:*

- Households consume about 5 meals with fish per week and 6 meals with other marine resources (e.g., clamshell, mudshell, and mudcrab)
- Species most preferred for consumption limited: total 7 fish species and 2 types of shells

##### *Fisheries:*

- High diversity in species catch: over 20 species listed, with 9 species only listed by 1 household
- High level of collection of other marine resources e.g., clamshell, mudshell, trochus, and mudcrab

##### *Markets:*

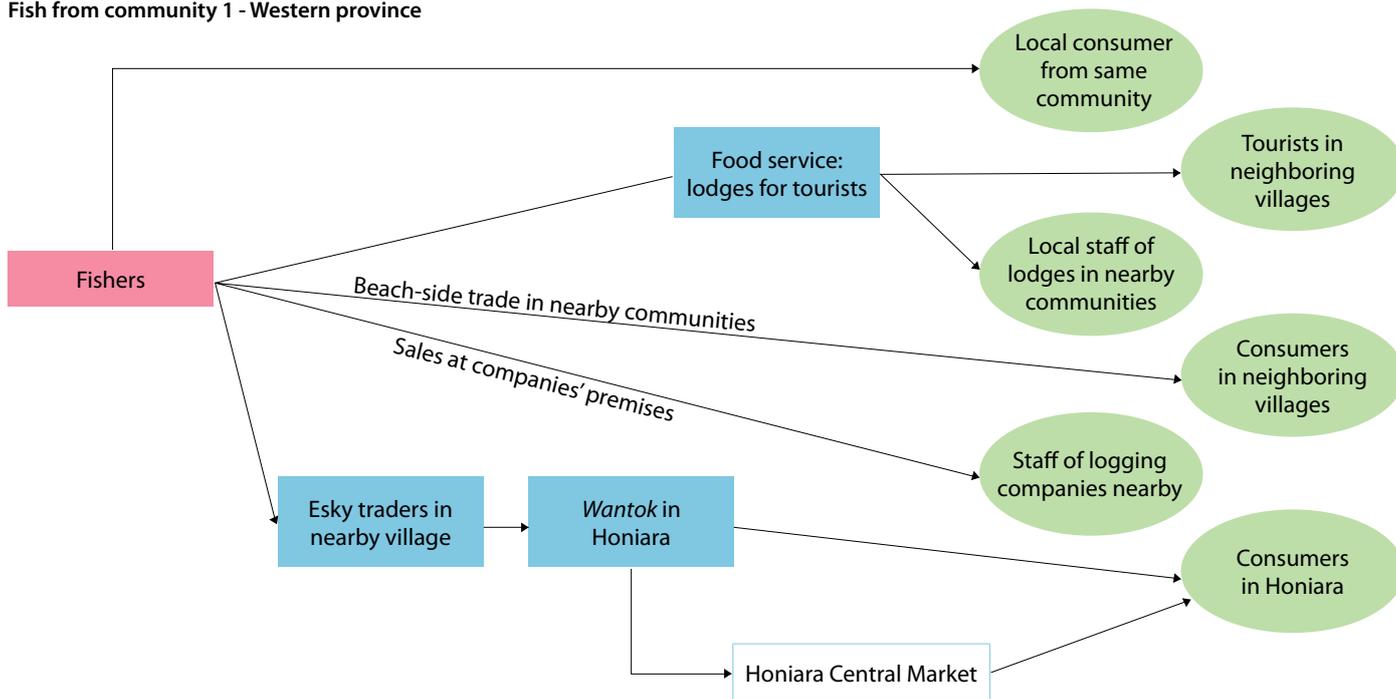
- Higher market access (outside the village) for marine resources than in community 1, especially through Fisheries Center and agents
- Social limitations to marketing within the village
- Ice available from Fisheries Center
- Key constraints: breakdowns of ice machine, lack of storage for marine resources, limited supply of fuel

## Marine resource value chains in Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands is characterized by a widely dispersed population across its many islands. Markets for marine resources in the country are widespread but for a large part highly informal. For that reason, value chains for marine resources are difficult to understand, exacerbated by the complexity of social relations between chain actors that underpin them. In addition, limited data are presently available on volumes and species traded. Market channels into Honiara are characterized by large distances, high costs for transport and ice, and unreliability of shipping. Furthermore, the institutional framework surrounding market chains is limited in the support it provides to improve markets. Value chains of marine resources in the two case study communities differ in terms of the number of potential market channels products can be sold through (Figure 2). This is a result of accessibility (i.e., distance to the nearest shipping route, availability of motorized boats, and accessibility of the shore for small boats in the village), institutional framework (e.g., the presence of the Fisheries Center in community 2), and the quantity of fish being traded. In both communities, fish catches of several fishers are usually aggregated by an intermediary or a lead fisher to overcome constraints associated with transport distances and costs.



Fish from community 1 - Western province



Fish from community 2 - Isabel province

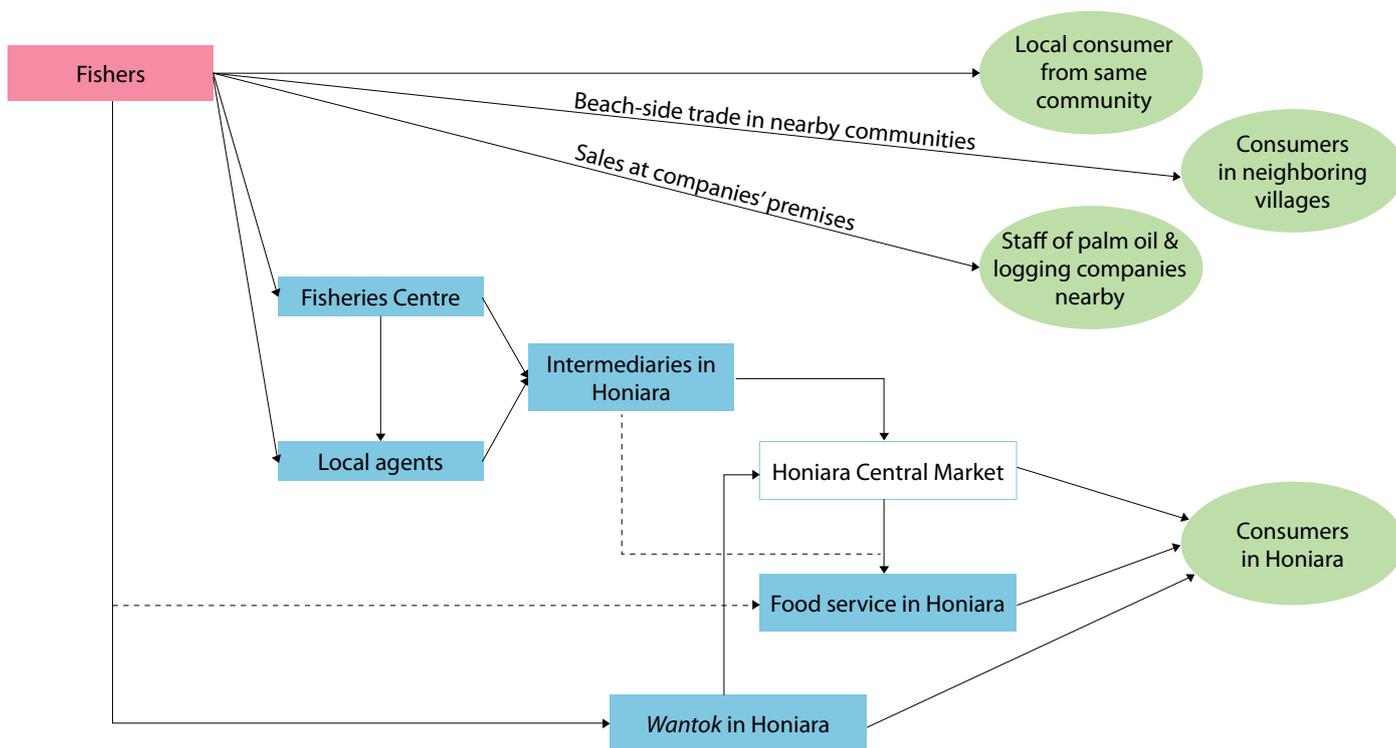


Figure 2. Fish value chains in the two case study communities.

Note: *Esky traders* are intermediaries who aggregate and pack fish in ice boxes ("eskies") to send to Honiara. *Wantok* is a term used in Solomon Islands to indicate the set of relationships between individuals with a common language, and/or from a common kinship group or geographical area of origin.



Women prepare lunch during a community program

Figure 2 shows the main processes in the value chain at the top (i.e., production, processing, trading, transporting, marketing, and consumption), and the main actors involved in these processes. In reality the value chain is often not as linear as depicted. Certain processes may occur at several points in the chain (e.g., for trochus shells, processing takes place in the community to clean the shell and remove the meat, while processing is also conducted by factories outside the country that transform the shells into other products such as buttons). Some actors may also fulfill several roles simultaneously (e.g., traders may both trade and transport the product). For some products, such as *bêche-de-mer* and trochus shells, the final consumer is abroad, so in that case value chains extend across the border.

To understand the way value chains are structured (i.e., who is involved) and how they operate in Solomon Islands, an understanding of informal institutions is particularly important. In Solomon Islands these institutions are embodied in the word *wantok*. While more understanding is required of this highly complex system, it is clear that relationships between value chain actors are highly influenced by it, but that this is more apparent between some actors than others. It influences outcomes in the price for which products are sold (sometimes for free or in exchange for an undefined return favor in the future), the terms of a transaction (more likely to happen on credit), and who is involved in a transaction. In addition, other social norms that affect the value chain's performance pervade the chain, depending on the customs in a particular community. An example of this is the dominant perception in community 2 that selling of products within the village is improper.

### Gender-differentiated value chain roles

Men and women often fulfill different roles in a value chain, have differential access to assets, and have disparate levels of influence in decision-making processes. Value chain roles also include other actors and activities besides the key processes (production, processing, trading, transporting, and marketing) in the chain, as there are many tasks to be fulfilled within each process. In the case study communities, men tend to dominate the catching of fish, use more fishing methods than women, and catch different species of fish. Women contribute labor to the fishing activities by preparing gear and bait for fishing and meals for the men to take on long fishing trips, and by assisting in gutting and cleaning of fish. Women's fishing activities are in general restricted to fishing from or near the shore and/or gleaning for shells and other marine resources. Sales usually seem to be conducted by those who have also caught or collected the marine resources (Table 1). Thus women's access to financial compensation for their work (e.g., supporting their husbands in several activities related to fishing, processing, and marketing) is linked to their capabilities to bargain with other value chain actors (in this case their husbands), and these capabilities are shaped by gender norms and power relations. It should be noted that value chain roles of men and women differ across Solomon Islands depending on local customs and religious beliefs, as well as the local environment. This is demonstrated, for example, by differences between the two case study communities in terms of which marine resources are considered acceptable to be consumed and sold based on religious beliefs.

**Table 1.** Gender roles in the value chains of marine resources in case study community 2.

Value chain process	Gender roles (community 2)
<b>Production: fishing &amp; gleaning</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both men and (some) women participate in reef fishing, but women use a more limited number of specific fishing methods, usually from the shore or close to home.</li> <li>Women play a “hidden” role by assisting in preparing gear, food, and drinks for men to take on their fishing trips and other tasks.</li> <li>Gleaning of other marine resources such as mud shells and clamshells is dominated by women, while crab collection is a shared responsibility between men and women.</li> <li>Children usually assist in the tasks of the parent with the same sex.</li> </ul>
<b>Processing: gutting &amp; cleaning</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gutting and cleaning of fish is the responsibility of the person that has caught the fish – typically men – however, women assist in this activity.</li> <li>Cleaning of trochus shells is conducted by women.</li> </ul>
<b>Trading</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Men are mostly responsible for selling of fish to the Fisheries Center.</li> <li>Women have primary responsibility for selling of all other marine resources.</li> <li>There are market channels for women outside the village, but these are limited, and women report receiving low prices from (mostly male) buyers and market intermediaries.</li> <li>Role of intermediary for trochus is only fulfilled by men (those who sell to the secondary processors or their agents).</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In local markets selling is done by men, women, and children; however, which household member dominates depends on the type of resource and the product.</li> <li>Marketing products for income within the village has limited social acceptance.</li> <li>In the market in Honiara men dominate and during fieldwork for this study no female reef fish vendors were found in the central market (although women had a strong presence marketing pelagic fish obtained from commercial fishing boats) as well as in other marine resources such as shells and mudcrabs, however vendors interviewed did indicate normally women vendors are present, although they thought that this was possibly declining.</li> </ul>
<b>Consumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input supply stores (fishing gear, fuel, etc.) in community are all run by men, and buyers are also mostly men; women may buy some hooks and fishing lines.</li> <li>The transporter (freight ship) has an all-male crew but many women in the office in Honiara.</li> <li>Ice is mainly sold to fishers to keep fish fresh during overnight trips; few women buy ice as they are less involved in fishing.</li> <li>Extension services are mostly provided to fishers, which are mainly men; thus women receive less training.</li> </ul>
<b>Inputs and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input supply stores (fishing gear, fuel, etc.) in community are all run by men, and buyers are also mostly men; women may buy some hooks and fishing lines.</li> <li>The transporter (freight ship) has an all-male crew but many women in the office in Honiara.</li> <li>Ice is mainly sold to fishers to keep fish fresh during overnight trips; few women buy ice as they are less involved in fishing.</li> <li>Extension services are mostly provided to fishers, which are mainly men; thus women receive less training.</li> </ul>



Preparing a garden for planting

### Gender-differentiated livelihoods

The case studies found interesting similarities and differences in how households and individuals in the two communities pursue their livelihoods, and in the roles of men and women. While the number of different activities pursued in the two communities differs, the number is equal for men and women within the communities; however, the type of activities differ between the two sexes. It should also be noted that the specific division of roles in livelihoods also differs somewhat between the two case study communities, and these findings cannot be generalized (Table 2).

Agriculture is undertaken by all men and women in both communities; however, there is a differentiation in roles between men and women, and there also may be a difference in the time men and women spend in the garden versus other activities. Producing coconut oil, marketing of gardened/foraged products, and tourism are more female responsibilities in the case study communities, while plantation crops and work outside the village are activities that men participate in more.



Paddle canoes are usually jointly owned by husband and wives

**Table 2.** Gender disaggregated livelihood activities in the two case studies.

Livelihood Activities	Community 1			Community 2		
	% of HHs	% of men	% of women	% of HHs	% of men	% of women
<i>N</i>	10	13	15	21	29	31
Reef fishing	100	100	100	100	<b>93</b>	39
Collecting other marine resources	60	<b>69</b>	33	100	86	<b>100</b>
Gardening	100	100	100	100	100	100
Foraging (collection from the wild)	100	92	<b>100</b>	95	<b>97</b>	90
Plantation (coconut, trees)	80	<b>85</b>	73	67	<b>48</b>	32
Coconut oil	100	85	<b>100</b>	76	31	<b>65</b>
Copra	80	<b>77</b>	73	19	14	16
Selling/bartering of fish/marine resources	100	77	<b>87</b>	86	<b>66</b>	52
Selling/bartering of gardened/foraged products	100	69	<b>87</b>	71	48	<b>61</b>
Selling/bartering of plantation products	70	38	<b>60</b>	52	38	35
Selling/bartering of processed products	100	<b>85</b>	80	57	38	<b>48</b>
Tourism	90	77	<b>93</b>	76	14	<b>55</b>
Carving (handicrafts)	80	<b>77</b>	0	0	0	0
Work outside the village (migrant labor)	90	62	60	48	<b>31</b>	6
Other income generating activities	50	8	<b>40</b>	71	<b>45</b>	39
<i>Mean total number of activities</i>	14.5	11.8	10.9	10.6	7.6	7.5

In community 1 (Western Province), 10 households were interviewed with a total of 13 male and 15 female economically active household members (age 15 and above). In community 2 (Isabel Province), 21 households were interviewed with a total of 29 male and 31 female household members. The percentages of men and women indicate the proportion of women out of the total number of women interviewed that participated in the activity. Numbers indicated in bold show the dominant sex for this particular activity in each community.



Honiara reef fish market

## Gender-differentiated assets

Assets come in a range of forms, including productive, financial, human, natural, and social assets. They are integral to achieving secure livelihoods, yet men and women tend to have different access to or control over assets and different capabilities in using assets in order to achieve improved livelihoods (Weeratunge et al. 2012). Previous studies in Solomon Islands have found that generally men own and have access to a much wider range of fishing gear than women (Prange et al. 2009). In the case study community in Western Province, productive assets for fishing (such as spear guns, hook and line, and goggles/masks) are more commonly owned and used by men. Women tend only to own and use the types of fishing equipment used to fish from the shore, which coincides with the type of fishing activity they are most involved in. Husbands and wives jointly own and use paddle canoes, although women generally use the canoes to access gardens rather than for fishing activities. While there is some indication that there is increased acceptance of women fishing for livelihood purposes, unequal gender relations will affect women's capacity to access proper tools and inputs. To make the most of this new livelihood option, women would need support in accessing these tools and inputs.

In the case study community in Western Province, women do have control over selling products and setting prices of products for sale, processing fish, and purchasing food and household goods. Giving women an opportunity to access more remunerative livelihood activities such as selling a wider variety of agricultural products (by introducing other crops and livestock such as

chickens) could therefore have a positive impact on household well-being, as long as this addition does not increase their workload. While the opportunity to participate in income-earning activities is important, the key question relates to whether women have control over the financial resources earned from their work. Assessing this for the case study community in Isabel Province resulted in two main findings: 1) Income from fish is more equally divided between husband and wife than that from other marine resources (in the latter case the income is mostly managed by the person who has sold the resource regardless of sex); and 2) when a woman is involved in the sale of any marine resources she receives a larger share of the responsibility for spending the income. Women's control over financial assets is intimately linked to bargaining capacity, within the household as much as outside it.

## Gender and decision-making

Unequal gender norms and roles inform the different levels of influence that men and women have in decision-making processes within households and communities. Most commonly, women's lower position vis-à-vis their husbands or male community members often makes it difficult for them to influence the key decisions affecting the livelihoods of themselves and their families (Agarwal 1997).

The study in the community in Western Province found that while men and women are responsible for different types of decisions within the household, they also report making joint decisions (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Decision-making in households in case study community 1.

	Men	Women	Joint
When and where to fish	x		
Household gardening and marketing of products	x		
Fish processing		x	
Selling price of fish		x	
Purchase of food & household goods		x	
Spending income from selling fish			x
Purchase of clothes, children's education, family health care			x
Birth, marriage, funerals, religious			x

At the community level, however, men tend to dominate decision-making processes and spaces, and respondents stated that it is rare to see women involved publically in decision-making. Men often hold most of the leadership positions in the community, due to customary power relations that favor males. Even when land or reef ownership follows the matriline, power may be vested with male kin rather than female family members (Weeraratunge et al. 2012). In Malaita Province, Boso and Schwarz (2009) found that all interviewed men said they were always or sometimes involved in decision-making around management of marine resources, while 72% of women said they were never involved.

While the preliminary studies indicate a lack of women's involvement and leadership in community groups and decision-making processes, the causes behind this are not clear. There is a need to go beyond research that looks only at women's deficit of skills or confidence when it comes to participation to consider the gender norms that make it difficult for women to participate regardless of their capabilities. This will involve seeking an understanding of the gender norms that shape women's public roles, as well as norms around men's public versus private responsibilities.

## Recommendations

The case studies summarized here draw attention to men's and women's gender-specific roles in marine resource value chains and other livelihood activities in two communities in Solomon Islands. These differences tend to lead to unequal outcomes and opportunities for men and women, with associated consequences for achieving livelihood security and well-being. While more in-depth understanding is still required, some lessons can be learned from this work:

- When assessing and intervening in marine resource-based livelihoods, it is essential to go beyond identifying the visible differences to attempt to explain the underlying causes of these disparities.
- Improving the equity of gender and decision-making would need to include building capacity and knowledge of women to be able to contribute to decision-making processes; for example, increasing skills, as well as addressing underlying gender norms.
- There are several potential entry points for upgrading the marine resource value chain:
  - Opportunity to experiment with new models for horizontal coordination between fishers/gleaners (collective marketing) to reduce marketing costs and costs of inputs, especially for women.
  - Training and awareness on alternative processing options to improve fish and shell preservation in order to reduce wastage and increase shelf-life.
  - Diversification of agricultural products for marketing.

## Further information and research needs

In the above we have highlighted some of the key areas of inquiry when trying to improve value chains, especially for women and other vulnerable groups. However, there is one additional area of research that has received less attention in this brief but that is important for the future sustainability of marine resource value chains. While a lot of work is taking place on community-based resources management and other conservation efforts, there may be less understanding of how this interrelates with consumer demands in the final market. There is therefore a need to further assess the interplay of market demands and marine resource conservation, including the impact of policies in both of these areas. There may be options to promote and develop alternative markets for particular products that encourage the catch of more sustainable resources and increase participation of women in these markets. While improving livelihoods through value chain interventions has high potential, this should not be done to the detriment of marine resources and the future generations that depend on them.

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## *With communities, changing lives*

This publication should be cited as: Kruijssen, F., Albert, J.A., Morgan, M., Boso, D., Siota, F., Sibiti, S., and Schwarz, A.J. (2013). Livelihoods, markets, and gender roles in Solomon Islands: case studies from Western and Isabel Provinces. CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Penang, Malaysia. Project Report: AAS-2013-22.

The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems is a multi-year research initiative launched in July 2011. It is designed to pursue community-based approaches to agricultural research and development that target the poorest and most vulnerable rural households in aquatic agricultural systems. Led by WorldFish, a member of the CGIAR Consortium, the program is partnering with diverse organizations working at local, national and global levels to help achieve impacts at scale. For more information, visit [aas.cgiar.org](http://aas.cgiar.org).

Design and layout: Joelle Albert

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Photo credits: Front cover, Fred Olivier; page 3, Anne-Maree Schwarz; page 4-8, Froukje Kruijssen; page 9, Wade Fairley; page 10-11, Froukje Kruijssen; back cover, Wade Fairley.

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