



Photo credit: Meshach Sukkur/WorldFish

## Gender-inclusive facilitation for community-based marine resource management

An addendum to “Community-based marine resource management in Solomon Islands: A facilitators guide” and other guides for CBRM

Led by

Funded by

# Gender-inclusive facilitation for community-based marine resource management

## Authors

Danika Kleiber, Philippa Cohen, Helen Teioli, Faye Siota, Aurelie Delisle, Sarah Lawless, Dirk Steenberg, Chelcia Gomes, Rolenas Baereleo Tavue, Astrid Vachette, Pita Neihapi, Ada Sokach, Owen Li, Lisa Wraith, Douglas Koran, Brooke Campbell, Rolenas Baereleo Tavue, Rooti Tioti, Toaiti Vanguna, Jillian Tutuo Wate, Delvene Boso, Agustinha Duarte, Margaret Batalofo, Neil Andrew, Meshach Sukulu, Janet Saeni-Oeta, Sarah Sutcliffe, Hampus Eriksson, Julie Newton and Cynthia McDougall.

## Citation

This publication should be cited as: Kleiber et al. 2019. Gender-inclusive facilitation for community-based marine resource management. An addendum to "Community-based marine resource management in Solomon Islands: A facilitators guide" and other guides for CBRM. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2019-08.

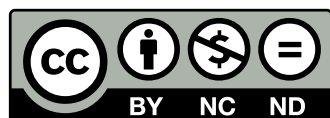
## Acknowledgments

These strategies were shared and summarized by the facilitators of community-based management who attended a gender-integration training session in 2018 that was conducted as part of the Pathways project. This work was funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) project FIS/2016/300 and undertaken as part of the [CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems \(FISH\)](#) led by [WorldFish](#). The program is supported by contributors to the [CGIAR Trust Fund](#).

## Contact

WorldFish Communications and Marketing Department, Jalan Batu Maung, Batu Maung, 11960 Bayan Lepas, Penang, Malaysia. Email: [fish@cgiar.org](mailto:fish@cgiar.org)

## Creative Commons License



Content in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](#)), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

© 2019 CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems.

## Photo credits

Front cover, page, Meshach Sukulu/WorldFish; page 2, Jan van der Ploeg/WorldFish; page 4, Aurélie Delisle/WorldFish; page 10, Paul Jones

In collaboration with



# Table of contents

---

Introduction	1
Why do we use gender-inclusive facilitation?	2
Who is responsible for gender-inclusive facilitation?	4
Reflexive facilitation cycle	5
Strategies	7
Pre-facilitation strategies	7
Facilitation strategies	7
Post-facilitation strategies	9
References	11

# Introduction

---

People who rely on a natural resource should be central to decisions about how that resource is used and managed. This principle is at the core of community-based resource management (CBRM) and other forms of collaborative management or co-management. CBRM aims for high levels of resource-user participation in decision-making and in managing resources. In practice, however, different social groups experience collaborative management approaches differently (Evans et al. 2011). The processes and outcomes of collaborative management can preferentially benefit (Cinner et al. 2012) or disadvantage (Béné et al. 2009) certain sectors of society and can also exacerbate existing power imbalances and lead to elite capture (Béné et al. 2009; Cinner et al. 2012) in which public resources are managed in a way that benefit a few individuals of superior social status to the detriment of the larger population. They may also inadvertently exclude or marginalize women (or other groups) from decision-making processes and from the resources they rely upon (Kleiber et al. 2015; Vunisea 2008).

When management partners or facilitators engage communities, they must use deliberate, thoughtful and reflexive strategies to reduce the risk of exacerbating existing power imbalances (Schwarz et al. 2014). This brief draws upon lessons and experience from across the Pacific region, where there is a long history of community-based approaches to address fisheries and marine resource management (e.g. Johannes 1982). The region also has decades of national programming (e.g. King and Faasili 1998; Raubani et al. 2017), relatively recent high level recognition (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2015) and widespread interest in spreading and improving these approaches (Govan et al. 2009).

This brief helps facilitators use, reflect on, and adapt gender-inclusive strategies in their work with communities. It aims to increase the frequency and quality of strategies used to reach women, men, youths and other social groups in the preparation, design, implementation and adaptation stages of CBRM. While the advice here is prepared with the Pacific island countries and community-based fisheries and marine resource management specifically in mind, some elements are more broadly applicable and also reflected in extensive experiences and feminist research from other agricultural and development sectors. We focus on gender-inclusive strategies facilitators can use when working with communities. When used thoughtfully as part of a larger cycle of gender-aware reflection on the equity of the process, the strategies are meant to enable gender-equitable participation in CBRM discussions, negotiation, planning and decision-making processes. This is not a step-by-step manual on “how to do gender” or a recipe that will guarantee equitable processes or outcomes.

While gender-inclusive facilitation or practice has multiple dimensions, in this brief we refer to this in shorthand as “reaching” women and men (See ‘Reach’ Figure 2). We begin by highlighting what it means to “equitably reach” women and men—or, in other words, being gender-inclusive in facilitation and who is responsible for doing this.



## Why do we use gender-inclusive facilitation?

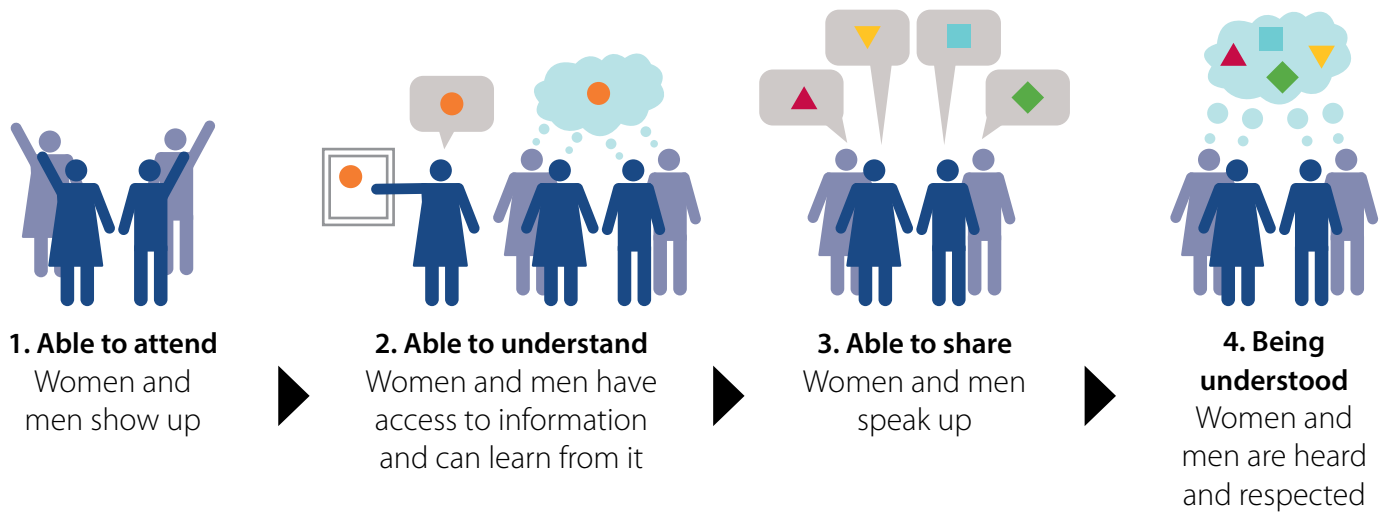
This brief shares strategies that can contribute to more gender-inclusive community-based fisheries management (CBFM) discussions, planning and decision-making processes. But there are many steps to gender-inclusive participation—having women and men at the meeting is only one step (Figure 1). Gender-inclusive facilitation techniques are an important foundation that may influence equity at all stages of participation.

Is equitably reaching women and men the same as achieving equitable outcomes or even empowerment? Not at all (Figure 1). The strategies outlined in this brief focus on “reach” (Figure 2). Reach refers to ensuring women and men are participating in information exchange, discussions

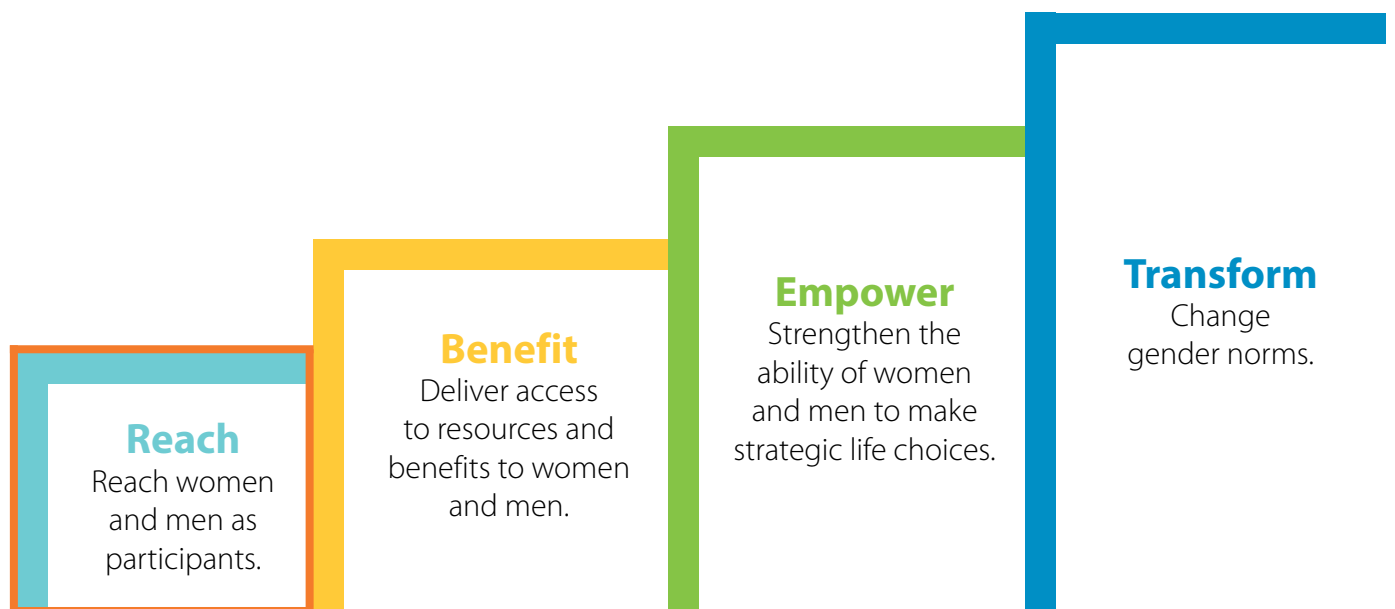
and decision-making processes. Many initiatives wrongly assume that effectively *reaching* women is sufficient to benefit and empower them (Theis and Meinzen-Dick 2016). Equitably reaching women and men is an important first step, but success here will not necessarily lead to equal benefits, empowerment or deeper transformation of gender norms, beliefs and relations (Johnson et al. 2017)—for this, other strategies (not detailed here) would be needed. Nonetheless, good practices and gender-inclusive facilitation to reach women, men and other groups in societies *may increase the likelihood* that benefits are equitable and that women and men are more empowered, though they do not guarantee it.



Community facilitator Andrew Ega explains the draft marine resources management plan during a community meeting in Fumamato'o, Solomon Islands.



**Figure 1.** Four components of gender-inclusive participation in the CBFM process.



Sources: adapted from the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems 2017; Johnson et al. 2017; Theis and Meinzen-Dick 2016.

**Figure 2.** Four stages of development engagements and research questions.



# Who is responsible for gender-inclusive facilitation?

Gender-inclusive facilitation is the responsibility of all members of a team to ensure that the strategies are applied throughout any process of community engagement. This must be more than simply ticking boxes. The questions throughout the reflexive facilitation cycle (Figure 3) and the list of gender-inclusive facilitation strategies listed below can serve as a guide for prompting regular reflection on inclusive engagement.

It is good practice to keep a written record of gender-inclusive processes and reflections. Such documentation is also critical for good project management and for monitoring and evaluation. It also enables research to better understand how the quality of a process might impact the equity of outcomes and management success.



Children-friendly women meeting during an M&E session in Taponibara, North Tarawa island, Kiribati.

# Reflexive facilitation cycle

Good facilitation includes planning, but it also requires observing the process and critical reflection afterward (Figure 3), which are then used to inform the next stage of planning. This creates a reflexive facilitation process that can respond to changing circumstances or unintended outcomes, and allows for adaptation and improvement over time.

The following points can act as prompts for reflections in Stage 3 (Critical Reflection) that may lead to adjustments to your facilitation plan, the structure and skills of your team or your overall engagement with a community:



**Figure 3.** Reflexive facilitation cycle.



**1. Did pre-existing equity issues create barriers to participation by some groups?**

Did you encounter the equity issues that you had anticipated in the planning phase? Did unexpected issues or concerns come up? Were you able to find strategies to overcome these barriers?

**2. Were all fisheries activities considered and valued?**

Have you ensured a broad understanding of fishing? Have you included all methods of harvesting from places and habitats? Collecting seafood by hand from mangroves or intertidal areas is often neglected, or not given as much value. Have you considered pre- and post-harvest activities and roles, such as gear preparation, cleaning, cooking and selling catch? Have discussions you have led, facilitated or brought to the surface opinions or views about the ways women, men and youths use resources, habitats, methods and species?

**3. Were all groups given a fair chance to participate (and how)?**

Have you ensured women, men and youths with disabilities, elderly, non-land owners, and people who migrated into the area are participating in the process (Figure 1)?

- a. Able to attend: Have you invited everyone and chosen times and spaces that work for different groups?
- b. Able to understand: Are you using language and communication styles that can reach everyone in the meeting?
- c. Able to share: Are you accounting for social norms about public speaking, such as whether it is socially accepted for women and youths to share opinions in communal meetings?
- d. Being understood: Are your spaces and strategies enabling the views, concerns and solutions of women, men and youths to be shared, heard and considered?

**4. Did all groups participate?**

Were women, men and youths present and participating in discussions where decisions about resource use, access and benefits are being negotiated and made?

**5. Did different groups view the outcomes as equitable?**

Did the people participating feel that the decisions made were equitable? Did they feel some groups shared a bigger cost or benefit? If so, who?

**6. Were there unintended or negative consequences or social conflict?**

Did people display or report social conflict or other negative consequences?

**7. How can you improve the facilitation and overall engagement of the process going forward?**

Are there formal or informal structures (adaptation processes, review of monitoring, decision-making committees) that mean decisions can be renegotiated and adapted (including around management decisions, rules, and enforcement) in a way where women and men can share their perspectives? Have your actions or suggestions played a role in making these structures and processes more equitable?

# Strategies

---

To increase the likelihood that CBRM facilitation is gender-inclusive and engages effectively with men, women and youths, consider the following strategies that have been used (individually or together) in CBRM facilitation in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati. These strategies will help minimize the risk of marginalizing women, men or youths, enabling more equitable decision-making processes. Not all strategies will work in all contexts. Local social norms and engagement objectives will determine what is most appropriate, and the efficacy of any of these strategies relies on the skills and experiences of the facilitator.

## Pre-facilitation strategies

- **Meet with community leaders, women's group leaders and youth leaders prior to engagements.**

Before entering a community, leaders (female, male and youth) should be contacted verbally and/or in writing. There may be specific cultural and social protocol that should be followed. Seeking out women leaders, or leaders of women's groups, may take a little longer and more effort, but it is important. At this time, you can set expectations that your engagement intends to work with women and men. Use the opportunity of this meeting to discuss the rationale for including women and youths, and discuss ways to make this possible.

- **Gather information about social and gender groups as well as dynamics and potential barriers.**

If possible, ask the leaders or other contacts about potential barriers to equitable participation. These could include local customs about who is allowed in or allowed to speak in meeting areas, as well as common time constraints for women and men. Also, potentially identify leverage points or allies.

- **Check on the facilitation team's own gender dynamics.**

Have a team meeting about the gender dynamics you practice. Are men usually presenting while women take notes? What

are some inclusive behaviors you could adopt and model during the facilitation? Examples include taking turns to talk, not interrupting or talking over each other and respecting each other's input.

- **Be explicit within the facilitation team regarding the aims and the strategies it will use.**

Have a team meeting to discuss the equity barriers you anticipate and the strategies you will use during the facilitation process. This includes planning out the different responsibilities and making sure they are shared equitably (see strategies on the team gender dynamic above). Also, discuss how you plan to deal with conflict if it comes up.

## Facilitation strategies

### Attendance strategies

- **Make meeting times when women and men will be available.**

It is the responsibility of the facilitation team to make sure that meetings and discussions take place at times that suit men, women and youths within the community. Different times may suit different groups (Baereleo Tavue et al. 2016). In some contexts, for example, meeting on weekends may be best, or on a Sunday evening when both men and women can attend. Keep note of what times have worked well or have not worked well, and record the reasons to help with future planning.

- **Make sure that meeting catering does not limit women's participation.**

Catering for a community meeting is usual and often expected. Although it offers an opportunity for groups within a community to generate some income, it may also prevent women from joining because they are cooking. It can also subtly reinforce gender stereotypes of men as decision-makers and women as caretakers. Possible solutions include having less formal meetings where you can bring readymade food, or have the decisions made after the catering has been

finished. Other solutions could include single-sex meetings (please see **Sharing and being understood strategies**).

- **Allow children in the meeting and go with the flow.**

Women are often tasked with childcare. Allowing children in the meeting may allow women to participate who may not otherwise be able to do so. The structure and flow of a women's-only meeting can be quite different from that of a men's group, which may potentially be more formal (Dyer 2018).

- **Ensure you have a venue that allows women and men to attend and participate.**

Some venues in a community are cultural places where meetings with both women and men can take place. Ensure that these venues do not only allow for both women's and men's attendance but allow them to freely speak in front of the assembly to ensure joint discussion. As a facilitator, it is your role to also ensure that single-sex meetings are held in venues that are considered appropriate for the group of interest. For women, ensure that a meeting venue is both safe and easily accessible, as long-distance travel may be difficult and thus limit attendance.

## Understanding strategies

- **Make the presentation or process accessible to all groups.**

Select presentation styles to share knowledge, prompt discussion or deliver training in a way that is accessible to all groups, including marginalized ones. Take into account that education and literacy levels will vary and there will be different preferences for how information is transferred and received. For example, some people may prefer active demonstrations rather than verbal explanations or presentations. In general, good facilitation involves less formal meeting settings and ensures a range of different and active sessions and activities that encourage debate, engagement and discussion. This can also help to breakdown some of the formal barriers and gender imbalance in meetings.

- **Use theater and storytelling.**

Theater, song and drama provide powerful platforms to engage a broad range of people of a community in a discussion and can lead to action around CBRM processes and objectives. Using theater that presents a fictional yet relevant story, with embedded information and lessons, can effectively make sensitive *taboos* discussable, challenge ideas without finger pointing and attract members of communities who would not otherwise attend meetings. Importantly, plays as standalone performances are less likely to deliver useful outcomes if they are not immediately followed by a tailored workshop that draws on the play to interactively discuss ideas and have them make sense in people's own frames (Neihapi et al. forthcoming).

## Sharing and being understood strategies

- **Have both male and female facilitators, data collectors, interviewers.**

When preparing to engage with a community, plan to have both female and male facilitators. Having single-sex meetings run by facilitators of the same sex may assist community members to openly express themselves. It may also bring up issues that they might otherwise not feel comfortable discussing with a facilitator of the opposite sex and reassure them that their ideas and opinions will be listened to and recorded. Similarly, facilitation may be better where there is a cultural affiliation between facilitator and community. When financial constraints override such considerations, it is necessary to spend time ensuring that both women and men will be comfortable to discuss the topics of interest during the meetings.

- **Have single-sex meetings with joint reflection.**

This strategy requires women and men to meet or discuss separately, but then gather together to reflect on similarities and differences in the outcomes. Here you may need to actively facilitate, ensuring you steer the process to allow both women and men to share their own views. This technique is often applied in the diagnosis phase, for example, where groups of women and men may separately map the areas of importance



for fishing, “free list” species of importance or identify issues and strategies for management. Facilitators need to observe and take note of the confidence and influence (as well as the number) of women and men participating, contributing or making decisions together based on a common understanding. It is also worth noting that some groups may nominate a spokesperson or representative, which is different from individuals dominating the discussion.

- **Have single-sex meetings without immediate joint reflection.**

Separate meetings or discussions may be undertaken in separate groups of women and men. In many instances, focus group discussions work well this way. It may be that these groups do not come back together for sharing reflections immediately. This has been found to work well, for example, in a process that first builds knowledge, dialogue and confidence among a group of women (Hilly et al. 2011). In this process, we try to encourage more women and young girls to fully participate and increase their participation by creating space and providing opportunities for them to share their concerns, ideas and thoughts on their livelihoods, nutrition, fisheries, access to land and sea resources, and so forth.

- **Promote active inclusive facilitation.**

Where women, men and youths are present, facilitators can help ensure equal participation of women and men during the meeting. This may mean noticing who is not speaking and actively seeking contributions from those who may not have a chance to share otherwise. This can mean soliciting input from an individual or making a statement such as this: “I’ve noticed we haven’t heard from any of the young men at the back. Could you please share what you think of XYZ?” Another technique is to split into smaller groups and have a representative from each group report back. Without active facilitation, the meeting may be dominated by particular people. Also acknowledge the contributions of people equally. Active facilitation can be challenging and may not fit the context, meaning that in some instances one large communal meeting (especially early in the process or in some communities) will

not be effective for equitable participation and other strategies will be needed. Good active facilitation that leads to a balanced discussion requires experience and great skill. Simultaneously, care needs to be given that facilitators are not influencing or engineering the main points that emerge from discussions.

- **Help less powerful or marginalized groups prepare for engagement.**

Organize a separate pre-meeting to gather thoughts and needs and even practice sharing key points “in group.” This can allow marginalized groups to better engage in the moment.

- **Set up the space in a way that positions participants as equals.**

Avoid high and low seats, backrows or seating that does not have a clear view of the meeting.

- **Count how often women and men talk in the meeting.**

To make a more objective measure of contributions to a meeting or discussion where women and men are both present, count how many times a woman or man speaks (see also Dyer 2018). This data could be used to help the team reflect on how facilitation is going and perhaps analyze trends in contributions over time. (For example, Baereleo Tavue et al. 2016 reported anecdotally that women’s contributions in joint meeting increased over time.) It does not matter whether it is the same person speaking, but it is important to identify and understand who is confident, influential and has the ability to speak out in meetings. Using the male (♂) and female (♀) symbols in your own notes is helpful, and facilitators should note if the same person speaks a number of times in the meeting.

## Post-facilitation strategies

- **Stay in the community, allow time and space for informal conversations.**

So much is never said or understood through meetings, interviews, etc., no matter how skilled the facilitation team is in creating an environment that promotes exchange. Mutual understanding is much better generated through genuine relationships and communication. Where CBRM “partners” stay,



how they engage and behave outside of any structured program is influential. According to Baereleo Tavue et al. (2016), “An important, but more informal, strategy [to understand different perspectives] was that the female facilitator would make the most of break times, meal times and evenings to engage women in discussions and hear their perspectives.”

- **Afterward, find out how different people experienced the processes.**

Using informal discussions with different people (including people from marginalized groups), ask if they felt respected and if they felt the outcomes were equitable. Also, reach out to people who did not attend or who did not participate and ask why.



The Wan Smolbag cast in Kwamera, Tanna (Vanuatu), performing ‘Twist mo spin’—a touring community play highlighting the social dimensions of coastal fisheries management in Vanuatu, including the role of women in fishing. The production of the play builds on a partnership between the Wan Smolbag theater group and the Vanuatu Fisheries Department.



## References

---

- Albert J, Schwarz A and Cohen P. 2013. Community-based marine resource management in Solomon Islands: A facilitators guide. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish.
- Baereleo Tavue R, Neihapi P, Cohen PJ, Raubani J and Bertrum I. 2016. What are the processes and local contexts that influence the form of community-based fisheries management in Vanuatu? Secretariat of the Pacific Community Traditional Marine Resource Management and Knowledge Bulletin 37:22–34.
- Béné C, Belal E, Baba MO, Ovie S, Raji A, Malasha I, Njaya F, Andi MN, Russell A and Neiland A. 2009. Power struggle, dispute and alliance over local resources: Analyzing ‘democratic’ decentralization of natural resources through the lenses of Africa Inland Fisheries. *World Development* 37:1935–50.
- [FISH] CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. 2017. CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (FISH): Gender Strategy 2017. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish.
- Cinner JE, McClanahan TR, MacNeil MA, Graham NAJ, Daw TM, Mukminin A, Feary DA, Rabearisoa AL, Wamukota A, Jiddawi N et al. 2012. Comanagement of coral reef social-ecological systems. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 109:5219–22.
- Dyer M. 2018. Transforming communicative spaces: The rhythm of gender in meetings in rural Solomon Islands. *Ecology and Society* 23:17.
- Evans L, Cherrett N and Pemsil D. 2011. Assessing the impact of fisheries co-management interventions in developing countries: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Environmental Management* 92:1938–49.
- Govan H, Tawake A, Tabunakawai K, Jenkins A, Lasgorceix A, Schwarz AM, Aalbersberg B, Manele B, Vieux C, Notere D et al. 2009. Status and potential of locally-managed marine areas in the South Pacific: Meeting nature conservation and sustainable livelihood targets through wide-spread implementation of LMMAs. Suva, Fiji: SPREP/WWF/WorldFish-Reefbase/CRISP.
- Hilly Z, Schwarz AM and Boso D. 2011. Strengthening the role of women in community based marine resource management: Lessons learned from community training workshops. SPC Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin 22:29–35.
- Johannes RE. 1982. Traditional conservation methods and protected marine areas in Oceania. *Ambio* 11:258–61.
- Johnson N, Balagamwala M, Pinkstaff C, Theis S, Meinzen-Dick R and Quisumbing A. 2017. How do agricultural development projects aim to empower women? IFPRI Discussion Paper 01609. 25.
- King M and Faasili U. 1998. Village fisheries management and community-owned marine protected areas in Samoa. *Naga* 22:34–38.
- Kleiber D, Harris LM and Vincent AC. 2015. Gender and small-scale fisheries: A case for counting women and beyond. *Fish and Fisheries* 16:547–62.
- Neihapi P, Sokach A, Koran D, Devine J, Dorras J, Andrew N and Steenbergen DJ. Forthcoming. Twisting and spinning theatre into coastal fisheries management: Informing and engaging communities to address challenges. SPC Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin.



- Raubani J, Eriksson H, Neihapi PT, Baereleo RT, Amos M, Pakoa K, Gereva S, Nimoho G and Andrew N. 2017. Past experiences and the refinement of Vanuatu's model for supporting community-based fisheries management. SPC Traditional Marine Resource Management and Knowledge Information Bulletin 38:3–13.
- Schwarz A, James R, Teioli HM and Cohen P. 2014. Engaging men and women in community-based resource management processes in Solomon Islands. CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2015. A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy. Noumea, New Caledonia: [Secretariat of the Pacific Community].
- Theis S and Meinzen-Dick R. 2016. Reach, benefit, or empower: Clarifying gender strategies of development projects. IFPRI Blog. [www.ifpri.org/blog/reach-benefit-or-empower-clarifying-gender-strategies-development-projects](http://www.ifpri.org/blog/reach-benefit-or-empower-clarifying-gender-strategies-development-projects)
- Vunisea A. 2008. The “culture of silence” and fisheries management. SPC Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin 18:42–43.



RESEARCH  
PROGRAM ON  
Fish

Led by WorldFish

## About FISH

Pursuing a research agenda through a network of multistakeholder partners, the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (FISH) enhances the contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to reducing poverty and improving food security and nutrition. FISH is led by WorldFish, together with the ARC Centre of Excellence in Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University, Australia; the International Water Management Institute (IWMI); Natural Resources Institute (NRI) at the University of Greenwich, England and Wageningen University & Research (WUR), Netherlands. In regional contexts, the program partners closely with governments, NGOs, the private sector and research organizations to influence national, regional and global policy and development practice.

For more information, please visit [fish.cgiar.org](http://fish.cgiar.org)