

Women in fisheries profiles

Rosalie Masu

Rosalie Masu was born in Honiara, Solomon Islands but grew up in a rural coastal village in Isabel Province.

Rosalie's earliest childhood memories are of fishing and gardening with her parents to meet the family's subsistence needs.



Rosalie holds a Master of Applied Science in marine biology from James Cook University in Australia, and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. She is currently the Deputy Director of the Inshore Division at the Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. Rosalie's main roles and responsibilities include overseeing inshore fisheries management, research, marketing and development, and community-based fisheries resource management activities. Since joining the Ministry in 2001, she has gained a diversity of experience in the development of national policies, fisheries management and development plans, fisheries regulations and practical hands-on experience in inshore fisheries management.

Rosalie is known and respected national, regionally and globally for her fisheries expertise. In addition to her national work, she has represented Solomon Islands and shared experiences from her country at regional fora. For example, she was involved in the development of 'A new song for coastal fisheries pathways to change (Noumea Strategy)', the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) 'Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development (2015–2024)' and the 'Coral Triangle Initiative for Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security'. Internationally, Rosalie has been engaged in developing Solomon Islands' voluntary commitments to contribute towards Sustainable Development Goal 14, and also participated in work under the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Why did you choose to work in fisheries?

I didn't really choose to work in the fisheries sector at first. I had always wanted to be a medical doctor but that dream was not possible and so instead I did a Bachelor of Science majoring in biology and chemistry. I imagined myself working in laboratories or some similar setting, wearing a white lab coat. But seeing my peers enjoying marine biology field trips, I realised I was more interested in marine science courses because they were very practical and they related to my life style as an islander. I undertook marine science courses for my biology strand. It was very interesting to learn about the marine environment, the biology and science about the marine life. Working in the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources was, and is still, a golden opportunity that I embrace and value very much in being able to contribute to fisheries development and management in Solomon Islands.

Why is the engagement of women in fisheries management important to you?

Engagement of women in fisheries management is important because of the roles they play in many different aspects of

fisheries. Women access different fishing grounds, use different fishing and harvesting methods, and also target different fish species, than men. For example, in my community, women normally target mangrove areas to glean for mud crabs and mangrove shells. Women also target closer reefs to the village to dive and glean for clam shells, other edible shells and sea urchins. When fishing, they only use hand and line in the nearby fishing grounds. Women also play different roles in fisheries value chains, including fish cleaning and processing (cooking). In our ongoing efforts for an inclusive approach, women's voices on fisheries management must be taken into consideration. Not only women's voices but also those of youth and men.

What message do you have for women wanting to work in fisheries or aquaculture in Solomon Islands?

I would encourage women to take up fisheries or aquaculture training because as Pacific Islanders, we are ocean people and our marine resources are part of our livelihood and culture. With many threats facing our marine resources, women as well as men have to work together to ensure that marine resources are developed and managed sustainably for today and for future generations.

¹ SDG 14 is to Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.