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Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture



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Pacific handbook for
**gender equity and
social inclusion**
in coastal fisheries and aquaculture

Second Edition

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Purpose of handbook and target audience

This handbook is designed to give practical guidance on improving gender and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture for staff working in fisheries agencies in Pacific Island countries and territories. It focuses on the responsibilities of Pacific Island governments to help promote sustainable development outcomes for all people relying on coastal fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods.

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Structure and concept

The handbook was developed in a two-stage process. The first edition of the handbook (modules 1–5) provides the basis for a general understanding of gender and social inclusion, an overview of key commitments by Pacific Island leaders, and basic analysis tools. Modules 1–5 are structured around the tasks involved in government work on coastal fisheries and aquaculture; that is, the planning and implementation of projects and programmes, including social analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and policy development.

The second edition includes three additional modules (6, 7 and 8), which shift the focus to practical fieldwork on the regional priorities of coastal fisheries management and livelihoods. Community engagement processes are presented as a prerequisite for inclusiveness and effective people-centred consultation.

There are tools attached to several modules to assist direct and easy application of the suggested methods.

While the modules are designed as stand-alone units, the handbook is one learning tool with important links between modules. There is a level of progression beginning with introductory or foundational content, which subsequent modules build on or reference, with overlapping or complementary themes.

One learning guide contains all modules with tools



Definition of key terms

Gender norms are the accepted attributes and characteristics of being a woman or a man (ideas of how men and women should be and act) at a particular point in time for a specific society or community. They are internalised early in life through the process of gender socialisation. Gender norms are used as standards and expectations to which women and men should conform and they often result in gender stereotypes.

Gender awareness is knowledge about the differences in roles and relations among people based on their gender. It is the ability to view society with an understanding of how gender roles and relations affect the needs of women in comparison to the needs of men.

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

When integrating gender and social inclusion (GSI) into coastal fisheries and aquaculture mandates, it is important to pursue a policy or strategy that is **gender transformative**. It is quite easy to adopt policies that are gender accommodative as opposed to being transformative. Organisations can have equitable interventions to promote gender equality and social inclusion along a continuum of lesser to greater commitment. All development interventions, whether scientific and technical or focused on social development, have an impact on people: they can reinforce inequalities, support the status quo, or transform relationships between people towards more equality and inclusion.

Gender accommodative approaches acknowledge social interactions and norms as the origin of inequity and exclusion and adopt approaches that will support women and other socially excluded people without disturbing social norms and traditional ways.

Gender reinforcing and socially exclusive activities tend to ignore gender inequality and social exclusion and contribute to reinforcing existing gender roles and social norms.

Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political areas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole.

Gender transformative and socially inclusive approaches strive to initiate social change to transform social relations that perpetuate inequality and exclusion.¹

People-centred approaches place people and their environment at the centre of planning, implementation, decisions, discussions, monitoring and reporting. They recognise people as unique individuals with valuable contributions, experiences and skills in a particular cultural context and set of values. A people-centred approach is particularly important in the Pacific context, as issues of environmental sustainability, gender, youth, culture and human rights cut across all areas of development work.

Women's economic empowerment "is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognise the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth."²

Gender-blind projects, programmes, policies or attitudes ignore the different rules, roles, rights, responsibilities and needs associated with women and men, as well as underlying power dynamics. Consequently, gender blindness maintains existing inequalities.

Gender-exploitative interventions use, and reinforce, gender inequalities or stereotypes to achieve outcomes. Such interventions take advantage of existing inequalities.

¹ Kabeer, N. 2003. Gender mainstreaming in poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals: A handbook for policy-makers and other stakeholders. Ottawa, Canada: Commonwealth Secretariat, IDRC and Canadian International Development Agency. 245 pp.

² Eyben R., Kabeer N. and Cornwall A. 2008. Conceptualising empowerment and the implications for pro-poor growth. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. Page 9.

Table 1. Different ways that gender equity and social inclusion are handled.

	Examples	Outcomes
Gender reinforcing and socially exclusive	In community consultation, women are not invited to meetings because it is assumed they stay at home and are not involved in fishing or aquaculture. Or women and youth are invited to meetings, but men dominate proceedings and the perspectives of women and youth are not grasped by project planners.	The project benefits men through increased knowledge and control over aquaculture or fishing technologies. Women must find other sources of livelihood. Or, men receive the project training but leave the work of the project to women, and the project then fails.
Gender and social relations accommodative	In community consultation, separate meetings are held with different segments of the population to give opportunities to discuss the issues and hear the concerns of different people: men, women, young women, young men, and men and women from different ethnic groups, castes, faiths, etc. The different perspectives are recorded by project planners, and accommodated in the project design. Separate activities may be planned, such as fisheries extension for men, and value-chain development or processing for women who sell the fish in the market.	The different roles of men and women are recognised and both men and women are given opportunities for training and improving livelihoods. But existing gender norms and inequalities are not addressed.
Gender transformative and socially inclusive	In a pond-aquaculture project in Malaita, Solomon Islands, married couples were involved in farmer workshops, where the different roles of men, women and youth in food production were discussed, revealing the importance of contributions by women and youth that are usually not recognised. Some couples then reflected on working together as a team, building understanding among the group about the reality of farm production. Women's confidence in attending workshops and speaking up in public meetings increased. Men recognised more of women's contributions to livelihoods.	Projects are effective in shifting gender norms to enable greater equality. Men and women are able to work more effectively together to achieve sustainable livelihoods from coastal resources.

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