

Capturing the value of fisheries using photovoice

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Background

Men and women contribute to fisheries in many ways. However, women's contribution to coastal fisheries is often not counted and is less recognised in the Pacific. Furthermore, most data collected in the Pacific on fisheries are quantitative, thus missing some important questions that can only be addressed with qualitative research. In particular, how women and men view and value their own roles in fisheries (including decision-making) are not visible in these statistics. Photovoice is a participatory method that will provide a platform for women and men in coastal communities to share their experiences and their voices through photography.

We used participatory photovoice methods to explore the following questions:

- How do women and men view their participation in fisheries?
- What benefits do women and men see coming from fisheries?
- What challenges to participation in fisheries do women and men see?
- How do women and men engage in decisions regarding fisheries?

Photovoice

Participatory research has recently been given increasing attention. One of the key features of participatory research is the commitment to honour the lived experience and knowledge of the people involved, and these are often people from oppressed groups (Gatenby and Humphries 2000). Photovoice is a participatory method that has been used in different contexts, but also developed specifically for small-scale fisheries (Simmance et al. 2016). Photovoice “enables local people to identify and assess the strengths and concerns of their community” (Wang 1997) and has emerged as a good tool for increasing knowledge around marginalised people in communities (Kindon et al. 2007). Women or men are able to express and reflect on their daily lives by communicating through the use of photographs (Wang 1999).

Pilot study site

We selected the Santupaele Community in Solomon Islands Western Province for the photovoice pilot study. Santupaele Community includes seven small villages located on the north-west of Kolombangara Island, in the Western Province, with a population of approximately 230 people. The livelihood activities for the people living in this community include fishing, farming, copra and employment in logging companies. The community has a marine protected reef area of about 6.2 hectares and a marine managed area of about 23.9 hectares. WorldFish has supported the community with the construction and deployment of a fish aggregating device (FAD) in early 2018. The purpose of the FAD was to provide an alternative fishing area and to relieve fishing pressure on the tabu reef. However, there are also challenges being faced by the community. Poaching is still reported in their tabu reef area, and logging operations are also close to the tabu and managed reef area.

Photovoice methods

The photovoice activity started off with a community consultation meeting between the researchers as well as the community. Three women and three men were selected to participate in this pilot study. These men and women all represented the different clusters of villages within Santupaele Community. All participants fished and were between the ages of 21 and 49.

The community consultation meeting was followed by a training on the use of cameras. This also involved participants understanding the safety and ethics behind taking photos. Participants were then given the assignment to take 10 pictures for each of the four main questions. This assignment was carried out over two weeks, with researchers checking in during this time frame. After the cameras were collected and photos were developed, participants were asked to pick the four photos that best represented the four questions. Participants were also asked to select one photo from all the photos that best represented their community. The participants were then asked to talk about the photos they took and these answers were audio-recorded and later transcribed. We then used their description and the photos to explore the research questions. A validation workshop was carried out with participants two weeks later, and participants were also able to share with the whole community their individual photos for each of the themes and then communicate the message behind the main photo they chose. Text analysis was then carried out using NVivo.⁴

“Pictures show real issues – it raises the profile of communities.”

Photovoice participant



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⁴ “NVivo is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International. It has been designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required.” (Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NVivo>)

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Results

How do women and men view their participation in fisheries?



I am very interested in this picture because this man is doing a fishing activity. He didn't have to go far to do this activity. He did not need a canoe but just stood on the beach and fished. He caught a big fish one that he is happy with. I am very interested in this picture because this was the first photo I took and the first fish this person took. The other photos showed that you have to use something to go out and catch fish but this photo showed that you don't need to use anything else to travel out to fish. The man only used a fishing line and hook and threw the line in to fish. It is less expensive and requires no extra cost.
Female participant, 2019



The picture shows a tree and branch, we use to fish. It is located in a bay and children fish here. This shows a fishing activity. It shows the place where children fish and it is close to the shore. The fishing activities are usually using line and hook and both adults and children take part in this fishing activity.
Male participant, 2019

The two photos show the most common fishing activity in Santupaele as described by the respondents. This is fishing by hook and line. The fishing activities are located close to the shore, which shows that accessibility and location is important for fishing in Santupaele. This type of fishing activity requires less gear and is less expensive. Other respondents highlighted other fishing activities such as fishing at the FADs and spearing fish. Participants also highlighted the importance of having a marine managed area as a part of their fishing activity.

What benefits do women and men see coming from fisheries?



In the picture is the fish that people have caught and put up for sale. This picture shows an old man who caught fish. This old man is over 60 years of age. He is old but hem caught fish and sell to support his family that's why this is an interesting photo. This photos shows that no matter where we live, the money is being generated around in the community through the fish we sell. There are also other ways to earning income for those who don't know how to fish. You can make a garden to sell food and for family.
Female participant, 2019



In the picture is money. There is a 100 dollar bill and 50 dollar bill. I took this picture because this is a benefit from fishing. We sell fish, we earn money to survive. We help our family and an individual. A man can benefit from fisheries. This is a clear benefit from fishing. It benefits the family very much.
Male participant, 2019

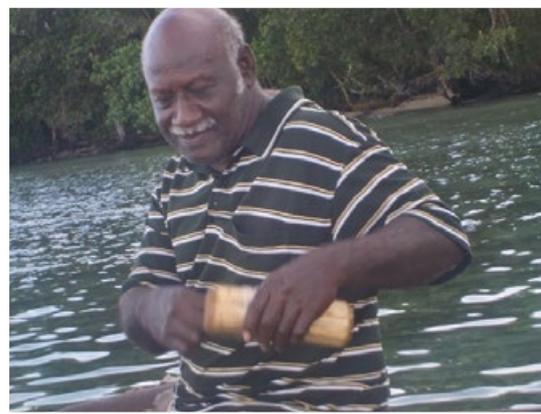
The two photos under this theme show that the main benefits that participants saw coming from fishing activities were income for individuals, households and the community. The first picture shows fish being sold by an old man to support his family. The second picture shows dollars earned by a young man and his family to survive. The other two

respondents discussed how fishing at the FADs to sell fish and lending fishing boats for hire provides them income for themselves and their families. Other benefits mentioned by the respondents include fish as a source of nutrients for schoolchildren and eating different varieties of fish.

What challenges to participation in fisheries do women and men see?



This is my brother. He is holding a fish he caught. He caught a big tuna. I took this picture because as you can see, the fish is not complete. A shark bit off half of the fish. I took this because shark is fish from the sea. A lot of times fishermen go fishing, they don't catch a lot of fish. There are a lot of sharks at the rafter right now. Female participant, 2019



The picture shows a man pulling in a bonito and he's fishing line has been torn but it is not clear in this photo. A shark tore his fishing line. I am interested in this photo because the man is sad when the line was torn. He was very sad when his line was torn. Male participant, 2019

Both pictures show the challenges in fishing where sharks tore fishing and hooks. This is a challenge faced by fishers when fishing at the FADs because sharks often attack their catch when they go out to fish. Other challenges, as mentioned by other participants, are a lack of good canoes for fishing. Leaking and broken canoes are challenges for fishers to go out fishing. The dangers that may come while standing in the sea and fishing is also another challenge, especially if one has no canoe and has to stand on the reef and fish.

How do women and men engage in decisions regarding fisheries?



This is an old man. He is my father. He is an elder in the community. He is very active in the community in any community work that we have. He usually blow the horn to call the community to do work. My thoughts on this is that he is an old man now and should be resting but out of every elder in the community, he is the first man to do work. He talks about work but he also works. He does that for our school, church and even at the home. He is a best contribute to work in Santupaele and we can see the outcome of that contribution in our community. Female participant, 2019



The picture shows a table of food with people lining up to eat. I took this photo because this is our contribution as fishermen to the community. We fish and these fishes help feed people who work in community in things like working on the school building. This shows us helping as a community. Male participant, 2019

resource management in the community. Other respondents highlighted their contributions in the form of money or fishing equipment towards the community church and school. Others mentioned the passing down of knowledge to the younger generation as their contribution to the community.

Discussion

All six respondents were able to relate fishing activities, benefits, challenges and contributions to decision-makings through the photos they took. While the questions asked

were based on personal experience, many of the photos and explanations depicted answers from a community-scale perspective. Apart from the four themes, participants were asked to share an overall message regarding their fisheries.



Here are women with cooked fish. In the picture are women feeding workman who are building the school. We cook fish and feed those who are building our school. This shows how our community is very cooperative. The message I would like to tell those outside of my community is the togetherness of the Santupaele community. This is so that others can see our commitment and do the same. Female participant, 2019

The two photos show the most common theme that emerged from most of the respondents for their overall message of the community. The common themes were fish and working together. Santupaele Community has worked closely together to ensure that resources and people are managed in a way that is beneficial for everyone but also one that will be helpful for the future. Establishing a managed area and setting up a FAD were ways of reducing pressure on the reef, and for this to happen, communities work together and are committed. Other respondents share the same vision, where Santupaele can be seen as an example for other communities to follow.

There were differences in focus by both men and women, and by age. For example, for fishing benefits, most women talked about having income from fishing activities as the main benefit. For men, two of the respondents talked about gender norms in terms of men's and women's roles as important with regard to food preparation and nutrition as benefits of fishing. Differences were also evident in the challenges described by respondents. For most men, the challenge was the sharks disturbing their fishing activities. For women, that was a challenge for their husbands, but for them, an example was the sea being a danger to them if they had no canoes and had to fish in the sea. An important note to mention is that while cameras were given to both men and women, the pictures still depicted the value of men's fishing and demonstrated a focus on men's fishing.

There were some challenges with using this method. On its own, photovoice can be limited in the way it answers research questions. This method would work better if it was used to triangulate other research on gender, community-based resource management or fisheries. This method can be costly, and participants may need more time for taking pictures; therefore, proper planning is needed. On the other hand, photovoice is a very easy method that can be used to help voice people's opinions to others. Images are powerful and



A rafter is shown in the picture because that is where we fish and sell our food. It is special because WorldFish made it for us. Fishers use different fishing methods to catch different fish there. The rafter has been built so we can go and fish there. In this way we look after our reefs. I want to tell other people to do the same and help others. I just want to say that we must do these things (rafters) to help our reefs. In this way, we won't destroy our reefs. We do this to help our community and our children for our future. Male participant, 2019

can be used to tell a story in a way that has never been done before. This method inspired participants from Santupaele, and they were able to share their successes and challenges in community-based resource management.

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