



Vanuatu gender training facilitators: Cedric Paniel, Chelcia Gomese, Sangeeta Mangubhai and Danika Kleiber (left to right). © WorldFish

## Building capacity for gender work in fisheries and aquaculture: examples from the Pacific

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### Introduction

Readers of this bulletin will all agree that it is essential to address gender in fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific. But where should we start? One commonly identified gap is the lack of capacity by governing groups to engage in gender work (Kleiber et al. 2018). Simply put, the people tasked with the regulation and management of national fisheries and aquaculture are more likely to be biologists, or ecologists, not gender experts. And while many Pacific Island countries have been working to integrate gender into all of their government agencies through gender focal points among their staff, capacity development is still needed (Leduc 2016).

In this report we will document two gender trainings developed for Pacific Island fisheries practitioners. The first was in Honiara, Solomon Islands (8 October 2019), and the second in Port Vila, Vanuatu (25–26 February 2020). We will outline the purpose of these gender trainings, the development and planning process, the activities used, and participant assessments.<sup>5</sup>

### Purpose

The overall purpose of the gender trainings was to raise capacity for gender integration among Pacific fisheries practitioners. Increasing capacity was done through training materials, but also by inviting local gender experts, to increase local connections between the gender and fisheries practitioners. In addition, the Solomon Island training was designed to train staff to conduct a gender and community-based fisheries management research project in 12 communities. In Vanuatu the training fit with the Vanuatu Fisheries Department's mandate to increase gender capacity, and while it was not linked to a specific research project, it did have a more specific mandate to develop clear pathways for gender integration into management and monitoring.

### Building partnerships

In both trainings, the preparation and delivery of materials was done as a partnership that was supported by the Pathways Project. In Solomon Islands that partnership included

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WorldFish Solomon Islands staff, the (national) Ministry of Fisheries, and provincial fisheries officers from Western Province and Malaita. In Vanuatu, the training was a partnership between the Vanuatu Fisheries Department, WorldFish Solomon Islands, the Wildlife Conservation Society Fiji, and Oxfam Vanuatu.

Many of these materials were adapted from a 2016 Promundo-led training, while others were developed in consultation with Pathways researchers, James Cook University professors and post-docs, and staff of the Pacific Community (SPC). These materials are meant to be adapted and improved.

## BOX 1. TIPS FOR SUCCESS

### Before the training

- Make this a process of collaboration with the local fisheries staff from the start
- Tailor the activities to the local context by:
  - consulting local staff
  - reviewing local fisheries and aquaculture policies
  - reviewing relevant research
- Invite local gender experts to attend (they can also be part of a formal panel)
- Invite a local gender expert (preferably with some experience with natural resources) to be a co-facilitator

### During the training

- Work in the local language
- Have one person take notes, or otherwise document the event

### After the training

- Analyse the evaluations and gender attitude surveys
- Share the results with the attendees
- Follow up with six-month evaluations

List of participating organisations in the gender training in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Location	Honiara, Solomon Islands	Port Vila, Vanuatu
Host	WorldFish, Solomon Islands	Vanuatu Fisheries Department
Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WorldFish, Solomon Islands</li> <li>• ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WorldFish, Solomon Islands</li> <li>• ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies</li> <li>• Wildlife Conservation Society, Fiji</li> <li>• Oxfam Vanuatu</li> </ul>
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 women, 9 men</li> <li>• WorldFish, Solomon Islands (n=10)</li> <li>• Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (n=4)</li> <li>• Provincial fisheries officers (n=3)</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisation practitioner (n=1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 women, 6 men</li> <li>• Vanuatu Fisheries Department (n=7)</li> <li>• Ministry of the Environment (n=1)</li> <li>• Wan Smol Bag (n=1)</li> <li>• Live and Learn Vanuatu (n=1)</li> <li>• Ecolivelihoods Development Association (n=1)</li> <li>• Oxfam, Vanuatu (n=1)</li> <li>• UN Women (n=1)</li> <li>• CARE (n=1)</li> <li>• Department of Women's Affairs (n=1)</li> </ul>

## What does gender training look like?

Our gender training materials were designed to be as interactive as possible, and are meant to encourage discussion among participants. The facilitators agreed to follow two simple rules: no PowerPoint presentations and no lectures. The facilitator's role was to be a guide and resource, but as much as possible to let the learning occur among the participants themselves. We will detail each of the activities we used, including relevant notes and responses from the two trainings. Because Vanuatu was a two-day workshop, we were able to include more activities.

## Ground rules

Because some of the topics that come up in this training are personal and attendees will be learning from each other, it is important to start with ground rules to create a shared purpose and expectations of behaviour. Ground rules provide opportunities for men and women to equally participate and to feel respected. This is particularly important to create a safe space for discussing challenging or sensitive issues such as gender stereotypes, norms and relations within organisations, communities and wider society. Good resources are available for developing effective ground rules (see Promundo-US and CGIAR 2016).

## Activities

### What makes a man, what makes a woman?

By the end of this session, participants were able to:

- understand the difference between gender and sex;
- remember how they learned to become men and women through socialisation; and
- understand how some gender norms can negatively influence the lives and relationships of men and women.

We started with this activity because it covers basic gender concepts. In this activity we asked participants to list all the traits, personalities and roles they associate with women and men. We then went through each one and discussed which are biological, and which come from social expectations and learning. In the end, participants found that most things people listed (such as caring for children, providing for the family), are things that both women and men can do.

### Gender fish bowl

By the end of this session, participants were able to understand, through cross-gender dialogue, how men and women are personally affected (positively and negatively) by gender socialisation

In this activity, called the "fish bowl", men and women gathered to discuss their experiences as a man or woman. At first the women sit in a circle in the middle with the men on

the outside. When the women speak among themselves, the men have to listen. Then the situation is reversed. This space allows each participant to be vulnerable and reflective of their own experiences. While the first activity allowed participants to understand gender as a concept, this particular activity allowed them to reflect on the role of gender, both positive and negative, in their own lives.

Reactions to the gender fish bowl:

*"My favorite activity was fish bowl. Since we get to hear and discuss different views from both men and women in the room which gives clear understanding of our different physical and social behaviors towards genders." Vanuatu participant*

*"I liked the fish bowl. It was a good environment to speak about things that we would usually speak about but not necessarily when others are there. So, it was nice to be vulnerable but still in a safe environment." Vanuatu participant*

### Fair, no fair!

The third activity used a case study of a community with resource management issues that many practitioners can relate to. This was a story of two women who decide whether the process used in community-based resource management is fair or not fair. In many cases the metric of inclusion is "participation", which is often measured as attendance. This activity was designed to examine the many different aspects of inclusion, and the various barriers that particularly women often face in Pacific Island contexts. It was organised into five different sections following five different steps of community-based management decision-making (Fig. 1).

The story allows participants to reflect on the many barriers to inclusive management, and to come up with possible solutions.<sup>6</sup>

Reactions to fair, no fair:

*"I like fair, no fair activity because we have an interesting story and it is related to the real issues in communities. There are also a lot of solutions to the barriers to inclusion in decision-making." Vanuatu participant*

### Panel of gender experts

In each gender training we also included a panel of local gender experts. In Solomon Islands this focused mostly on fisheries practitioners, including representatives from WorldFish Solomon Islands, the Ministry of Fisheries CBRM Section, The Nature Conservancy and the provincial fisheries officer in Malaita explaining their own work on gender. In Vanuatu, local experts included representatives from United Nations Women, Oxfam, Cooperative for Assistance and relief Everywhere (CARE) and the national Department of Women's Affairs. The panels shared the

<sup>6</sup> If this is a two-day workshop, write down the list of "solutions" generated in this activity, as it can be helpful for second day discussions.

approaches and tools they use to gender integration in their work programmes. The panelists in Vanuatu shared lessons and ideas with the Vanuatu Department of Fisheries to help them better implement their roadmap for coastal fisheries; this also helped to break down barriers between fisheries practitioners and experts working for gender and development organisations.

### Identifying barriers, finding solutions

On day two, participants worked in groups and looked at the barriers and solutions in the workplace, and developed implementation and monitoring plans.

In Vanuatu this led to discussions on the following themes:

1. Pre-existing norms and responsibilities: Increasing gender awareness in the community, especially for men and women in households.
2. Awareness and training: The distribution of awareness materials is needed in communities with a focal person in charge. Highlighting gender issues through media on important events such as International Women’s day are key to promoting awareness.
3. Working in communities: Engaging women in community events and involving both men and women in gender advocacy is key to working in communities.
4. Institutions: Strengthening interagency partnerships and at national and provincial levels are important for overcoming barriers.
5. Enabling environment and working in Vanuatu Fisheries Department: Providing equal measures that address

maternity and paternity rights for working mothers and fathers. This also includes creating policies and guidelines to address sexual harassment in the work place. Providing training and encouraging women to pursue further education is also key.

### Reactions to identifying barriers, finding solutions

*“Identifying barriers and finding solutions. It was eye opening and we get to voice out very important issues which we’ve never done such activities before. And be able to come up with solutions especially getting tips and advices to work around how to implement development of policies when it’s hard to be able to do so with our heads of departments.”*  
Vanuatu participant

### Training assessment

We assessed the short-term uptake of the gender training through a gender attitude survey before and after the training. The attitude survey consisted of 19–20 questions related to gender norms that are associated with fisheries, participation in decision-making, and more general gender roles. Overall, gender attitudes were more progressive after the training for both women and men, although women started with more progressive attitudes (Fig. 2). This may have been especially true in the Vanuatu training because many of the women participants were practitioners from the gender and development field.

While these gender attitude surveys provide a quick snapshot result, there needs to be a six-month follow up with qualitative questions about the integration of gender.

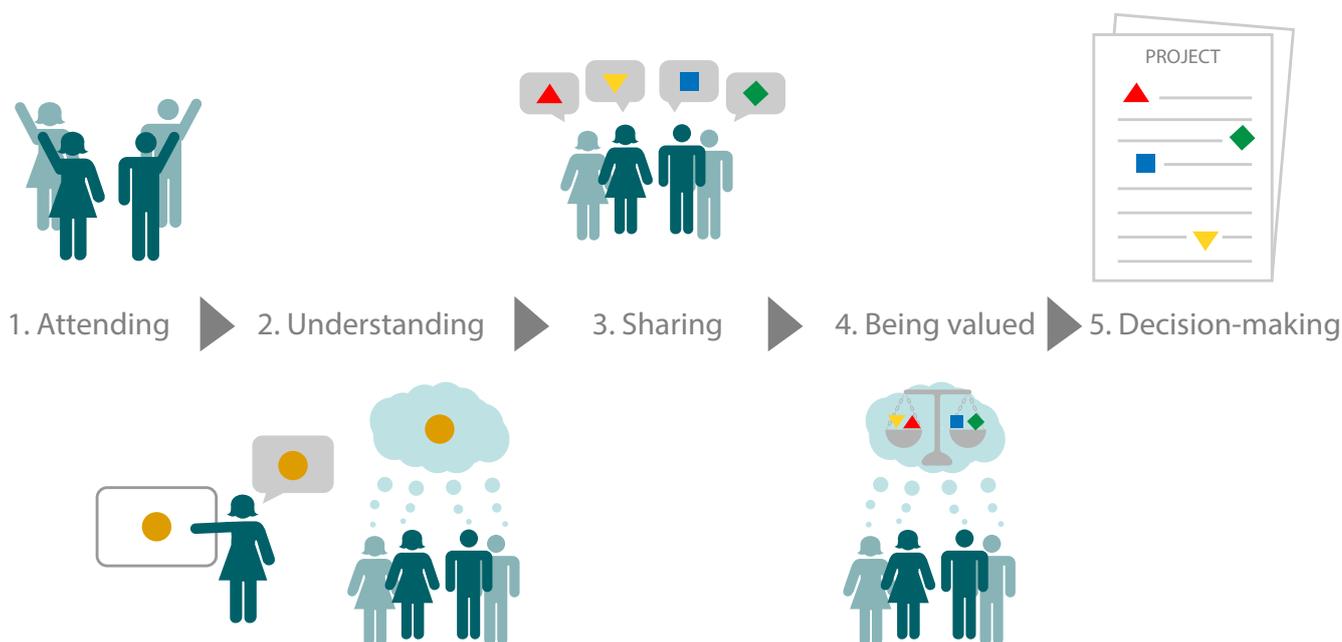


Figure 1. Five steps of inclusive decision making. Source: Adapted from Kleiber et al, 2019

## Future use of these materials

This report will feed into "Pathways" reporting purposes, and reporting back to Vanuatu Fisheries Department on implementation plans for their roadmap. This training will be adapted to fit Kiribati's context where the next training will be held in 2020.

Some of these materials have also been adapted by Dr Julie Newton, Senior Advisor at the Royal Tropical Institute, for use by gender trainers working in Indonesia.

*"What I really enjoyed about doing this training is that it focuses on shifting hearts more than minds – meaning, rather than listening to boring presentations, participants self-reflected on their own experiences, their core beliefs, and how these then influence their work and lives. This is just a first step, but it is an important step for those of us working in the fisheries or sectors."* Sangeeta Mangubhai, Wildlife Conservation Society

*"I found the training very informative and inspirational. The workshops were designed to be interactive; therefore, as a facilitator, I was pleased that this helped capture the audience's attention and also gave space for participation and personal reflections. It was interesting to hear differences and similarities around integrating gender within different sectors in both countries. I believe trainings like these provide a platform where those in the fisheries sector can see how gender is merged in their areas of work."* Chelcia Gomes, WorldFish Solomon Islands

*"The training was very fun and interactive. The interesting part for me was to see how gender affects us in so many different ways and tends to influence our decisions based on so many factors that have occurred during our life journey, since birth teaching from our parents, interaction with family members during family catering, church which basically all the experiences we have lived and now shaped who we are as a person and human being."* Cedric Paniel, Oxfam in Vanuatu.

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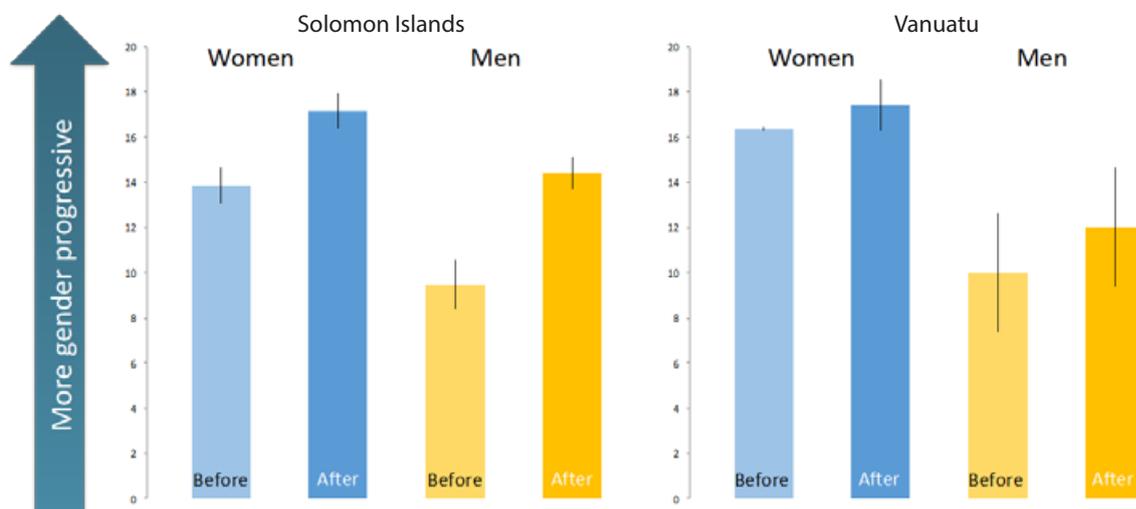


Figure 2. Average gender attitudes were more progressive following the training. Note, the questions for the Solomon Islands training were slightly different from those used in the Vanuatu training, so the two should not be compared.