

Two leaflets promote careers for women and men in fisheries

If you have a taste for adventure, you could become an on-board observer on a tuna fishing boat. If you want to work with local communities and design marine resource management plans, you will likely need a degree in fisheries science. If you are a woman, you may want to join the growing number of female fishery workers who hold positions of responsibility in the tuna industry.

These are just a few examples of careers covered by two leaflets produced by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to inform women and men about jobs in the fishing industry (see: <http://www.spc.int/fame/en/projects/scicofish/activities/179-brochures>).

The following texts are extracted from the leaflets.



Fisheries Observer, a career for both women and men

For many Pacific Island countries, fisheries are the most valuable natural resource. At the front line of protecting those fisheries is the Fisheries Observer. Because they are present at the fishing grounds, observers are the “eyes and ears” of fisheries managers, scientists and compliance officers. As an observer, you will collect information from commercial fishing vessels, and ensure that it is accurate and unbiased. The role of the Fisheries Observer is crucial because for some data, the observer is the only person who can independently verify the data supplied by fishermen. The data may later be subject to scientific review or court interrogation, so needs to stand up to scrutiny. There is no doubt that working conditions are tough on a fishing boat. You need to be prepared to handle unusual, sometimes difficult, working conditions. But you don't have to be a superhero to apply.

Can women apply? Absolutely!

Attitudes are changing and more and more women are seen as being just as capable as men in the fisheries industry. At the end of 2012, around 40 women from Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Palau and Papua New Guinea had been certified as Fisheries Observers.

Careers for women and men in the tuna industry

Around 60% of the tuna caught, canned and eaten around the world comes from the western and central Pacific — the world's biggest tuna fishery. The job market in the tuna industry is growing fast and employers are eager to attract more young people from around the region. And, with recent changes in regional policies, exciting new opportunities have opened up for people of all ages who are keen to create and manage their own businesses.

Women and men – equal opportunity

Over the past 20 years, attitudes towards women working in the tuna industry have change, and people have come to acceptance that careers in the industry are equally appropriate for men and women. More and more training and development opportunities are opening up in tuna processing, quality control, and research and management, and the number of women working in these areas is increasing. These women are demonstrating that there are no physical barriers to them doing the work.

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