

Summary Report: Gender and Fisheries Networks Meeting
22 November 2007
8th Asian Fisheries Forum
Kochi, India

Twenty-one attendees (see attached list) of the 8th Asian Fisheries Forum met on 22 November to discuss common networking interests on gender and fisheries and to develop comments on the draft Kochi Declaration. This summary report captures the key recurring themes and conclusions of the meeting, especially highlighting areas for future collaboration.

Barriers to women's entry

In parts of India, women are often not admitted to professional education and training in fisheries and aquaculture research and extension due to lack of basic facilities such as student dormitories. Following an approach to the Vice Chancellor of the Assam Agricultural University, a girls' hostel for entrants to the Bachelor of Fisheries Science course is now nearing completion.

Unpaid women's labor and wage disparities according to gender

Many participants recounted instances of the unpaid contributions that women make to fish production and of gender disparities in wages, along with efforts to find means to redress these inequalities. The meeting agreed that good studies on women's unpaid labor in fisheries and on whether women have the same opportunities for jobs and promotion throughout the sector, including as researchers. We should *ensure that such studies were undertaken and reported at the next Gender and Fisheries Symposium and elsewhere. [Action: symposium organizing committee for 9AFF-GAF3]*

Gender, women and fisheries networking

The work done for the Asian Fisheries Society gender and fisheries network by WorldFish Center through Choo Poh Sze was warmly appreciated. The network meeting participants felt that it would be valuable to *add all the network meeting and GAF2 presenters to the GAF list server* as presently not all were connected. This list was reaching more and more people and was a handy tool for spreading relevant information. *[Action: Choo Poh Sze, WorldFish Center]*

Getting gender into the fisheries and aquaculture curricula

University teachers and extensionists among the participants were interested in sharing and having access to gender/women and fisheries curricula and syllabi and case studies. It was noted that Barbara Neis and Siri Gerrard were working on such a project for syllabi, with respect to women in development, women in natural resources management, gender and development and related. Others were aware of courses that were being piloted now. The courses would have to differ for different regions.

Participants stressed the importance of fisheries and aquaculture education and vocational training policy incorporating gender. The next GAF Symposium of the AFF should address the subject of gender and fisheries in teaching and in the curricula. *[Action: Organizers of 9AFF-GAF3]*

Participants agreed to work on writing and sharing specific case studies derived from suitable research projects. Ram Bhujel of the Asian Institute of Technology agreed to create a format for these and work with contributors to get them loaded on the Internet, available and suitably linked to institutional home sites. [Action: Ram Bhujel, AIT]

Women, gender and fisheries source materials

Several participants highlighted the importance of making accessible some of the existing women, gender and fisheries materials, including some classic studies and the proceedings of the 1994 Cambodia Women in Fisheries and the 1996 Indochina Women in Fisheries workshops which led to the Asian Fisheries Society symposium. The 3 AFS symposia are readily available on the Internet. ICSF is in the process of getting seminal and older materials up, and welcomed guidance from participants on what the most important materials. The participants agreed to *cooperate on the forthcoming ICSF bibliography of gender and fisheries sources.* [Action: ICSF]

Opportunities

Small projects from Aquaculture without Frontiers:

<http://www.aquaculturewithoutfrontiers.org/>

The non-profit AwF organization was “established for the specific purpose of promoting and supporting responsible and sustainable aquaculture to assist in poverty alleviation through improving rural livelihoods in developing and transition countries. ..AwF is unique in devoting all of its resources and attention to aquaculture; however, it does not seek to promote aquaculture in isolation, but as a component of integrated rural and coastal development plans, and of strategies to alleviate poverty.”

AwF has small project funds available and is seeking quality proposals. Contact AwF directly or via Dr M.C. Nandeeshah. [Action: M.C. Nandeeshah]

Solutions through research

The WIF/GAF symposia appeared to have helped move experts towards doing more research on the topic, rather than simply reviewing available materials. This claim should be explored empirically, however, by *analysing the papers from all the WIF/GAF symposia for the extent to which they were research based, and review the research methods used.* However, we should also be looking further to how to make a bigger change in the research emphasis in future, through such mechanisms as more methodological development, better use of media such as the GAF2 and other websites for exchanging research ideas. [Action: M.C. Nandeeshah, Choo Poh Sze, Meryl Williams, any volunteers]

More generally, the *AFS GAF network should document all the impacts and legacies of the symposia with a view seeing what has led to positive change and how this has come about.* [Action: M.C. Nandeeshah, Choo Poh Sze, Meryl Williams, volunteers]

GAF and the draft Kochi Declaration

The participants discussed the draft Kochi Declaration and agreed to make the following comments on the draft in the AFS General Assembly the following day: The group felt that most of the issues raised in the declaration relate to trade and larger issues pertaining to fisheries and society have not been considered. Further , it

was noticed that declaration is aiming to create another institution, which might have conflict of interest with the existing organisations having mandates to address the types of issues raised. Hence, it was decided to request the committee to consider the issues related to gender that have emerged from the gender and fisheries symposium. As a general policy it was also decided to request the committee to include gender as a cross cutting issue in all issue in the declaration.

Summary of issues to be raised on first draft of the Kochi Declaration

The Second Symposium on Gender and Fisheries: Solutions through Gender Research calls upon the Asian Fisheries Society to work towards:

1. A sustainable and socially just fishery development and management.
2. Recognize, protect and strengthen women's roles in all aspects of fisheries development management, especially their roles in decision making processes.
3. Ensure that trade and tariff barriers do not hamper food security in fishing communities.
4. Strengthen and enhance small scale and subsistence fisheries.
5. Integrate gender concerns into fishery curricula across the region.
6. Ensure coastal communities have access to their coastal resources.
7. Improve the livelihoods of men, women and children in fishing communities or dependent on fishing.

Networks Meeting Attendees

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