



INITIATIVE ON
Gender Equality

Voice and Leadership for Women in Fisheries to Actively Participate in Governance and Leadership Roles

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Contents

Acronyms	3
Executive Summary	4
Workshop Overview	5
Objective	5
Session 1: Understanding Governance In Fisheries	5
Session 2: Leadership Development	7
Developed Solutions	9
Workshop Outcomes	9
Conclusion	10
Workshop Program	10

Acronyms

AWFISHNET	African Women Processors and Traders Network
BMU	Beach Management Unit
CTM	Community Triangle Model
EMEDO	Environmental Management and Economic Development Organization
TAWFA	Tanzania Women Fish Workers and Traders Association

Executive Summary

The goal of HER+ is to build the economic resilience of women to climate change challenges in agri-food systems (AFS) through gender equality and social inclusion. In February 2023, the HER+ team studied how gender norms constrain women's economic resilience to climate change challenges among fisherfolk in Muleba district of Kagera region in Tanzania. Following the completion of the study, WorldFish and AWFISHNET Tanzania Chapter (TAWFA) and Environmental Management and Economic Development Organization (EMEDO) partnered to disseminate and validate research findings and identify leverage points to transform gender norms and make women economically resilient to the impacts of climate change in the fisheries value chain.

Muleba is one of the biggest fisheries districts in Tanzania, where silverfish, locally known as 'dagaa', is harvested and processed. The workshop illustrated that:

- the importance of working with men's and women's opinion leaders in communities and traditional authorities to challenge gender norms.
- the need to raise awareness among men and women about the consequences of gender inequalities in the fisheries value chain is paramount.
- Muleba is also characterized by strong gender norms against men's or women's involvement at specific nodes of the value chain, which affect women's adaptive.

This report presents the outcome of the workshop with women on December 14th 2023 at Sanard Hotel. The main objective of the workshop was to empower women in the fisheries sector with the knowledge and skills required to actively participate in governance and leadership roles, thereby enabling them to raise their voices and contribute to decision-making processes in their communities. A total of 37 participants participated in the workshop, and these were drawn from various stakeholders, including women fish processors, Beach Management Units (BMUs), government authorities in the region, representatives from EMEDO, and WorldFish. The women fish processors at the workshop represented AWFISHNET's country chapter, known as TAWFA.

Workshop Overview

The workshop was organized as part of our ongoing commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the fisheries industry with support from WORLD FISH. The event aimed to provide a platform for women to enhance their understanding of governance structures, leadership principles, and communication strategies. By equipping them with these essential skills, we sought to foster their active engagement in addressing the challenges faced by their communities and advocating for their rights and interests.

Objective

The objective of the workshop was to empower women in the fisheries sector with the knowledge and skills required to actively participate in governance and leadership roles, thereby enabling them to raise their voices and contribute to decision-making processes in their communities.

Activities and Sessions

Introduction and Icebreaker

The workshop facilitated with Mr. Lawrence Kitogo began with an engaging icebreaker activity to create a comfortable and interactive environment for the participants. This helped

in establishing rapport and fostering a sense of community among the attendees. The ice breaker activity engaged women singing while drawing fruits using their hands.

Session 1: Understanding Governance In Fisheries

A comprehensive session was conducted to provide insights into the governance frameworks governing the fisheries sector, including the roles of local authorities, regulatory bodies, and community organizations. Emphasis was placed on the importance of women's participation in decision-making processes. The session applied the use of Community triangle Model (CTM) so that women are able to identify the challenging issues that limits them in raising their voices, in governance systems.

About the Model

This model is a tool used to evaluate the functionality and relationships within community governance systems for fisheries. The triangle consists of three angles - BMU, Community Development Officer, and Fisheries Officer - each with their own structure, roles, functions, guidelines, and objectives. While the model aims to assess and scan the challenges hindering women from raising their voices in governance and fisheries, the primary focus remains on the relationship and functionality of the community governance system.

For the triangle to be compelling, there must be two-way communication and feedback, coordination between all actors, and transparency to enhance trust, especially among women fish processors and traders.

Figure 1. The CTM model where women have rated the percentage on each stakeholder placed on the triangle.



Members were asked to rate the triangle (with percentage) to indicate the relationship of women processors and important three actors i.e., BMUs, Fisheries and Community development department, and results were as follows;

Through the model, the facilitator observed gender related issues, to know the representation of women in BMU executive committee. Questions included how many women are BMU members in their communities? Are there any women in the BMU s from the communities where you come from? If no, why is it so? Responses indicated that there were no women in the BMU executive committee from the participants communities.

Table 1. Caption needed.

Stakeholders	Beach Management Units	Fisheries Department	Community Development department
Rated percentages			
(%)	0	50	30

Source: EMEDO

The following were the reasons mentioned, to support the rating as indicating above

- The communication channels from the BMUs are not inclusive or transparent, therefore women miss out on important information such as open positions in the BMUs, that could empower them to participate more actively in decision-making processes.



I have been at Kemono landing site I have never seen BMU hold a meeting even once, in fact the chairperson has been there for seven years, it is just corruption keeping him in power so how can we women be leaders in such environment? It's hard.

- Woman processor

- Many women do not really understand the roles and responsibilities of BMU, so they do not feel obligated to be in the committee. Without clear orientation, women feel uncertain about how they can contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes within the BMUs. This have led to limited engagement and participation, as they are unsure of where and how to assert their voice.
- A lot of BMUs in the communities are corrupt that they do not give women a chance. Corrupt practices, such as bribery and favoritism, have exclude women from decision-making processes within BMUs. When decision-making is influenced by corruption, women find it difficult to assert their voices and influence policy development, resource allocation, and other important matters that affect their livelihoods.

- Some women are not allowed by their partners to engage in the activities of governance like be in the BMU committee, because it is considered a man jobs (gender norms).
- Women are faced with unique work-life balance challenges, particularly because they are responsible for caregiving and domestic duties. The demanding nature of fishing work in the BMU makes it difficult for them to take on additional governance responsibilities

The same question was used to identify the challenges posed by the Fisheries and Community development department, because they are important stakeholders that can support women to raise their voices and engage in the governance of fisheries sector. The following responses were identified.

- The fisheries officers are not supportive of women business since they do not provide any orientation on the legal frameworks, that would aid women in complying with the laws. women have limited access from them on crucial information about fishing practices, regulations, market trends, and other relevant aspects in fishing which normally affects their business.
- Fisheries department are working with BMUs office together but they do not enforce to ensure that women are members in the executive committees which would support women's engagement in governance to be able to support other women in the sector.
- Fisheries officer are contributing to limiting women's voice, an example is made when gatherings or workshops are organized in the presence of fisheries officer and if women make comments regarding their landing sites environment, they are normally rebuked from raising their voice on such matters such as lacks of sanitary space, corruption from fishermen where women have to trade sex in return of being sold fish or sometimes being given for free (sex for fish).

- The community development department has been delaying with the loan granting process for women; such have hindered women from starting their own fisheries-related businesses, such as fish processing or aquaculture. Without the capital to invest in equipment, infrastructure, or inventory, women are struggling to establish or expand their businesses, thereby limiting their participation and influence in the sector.

“ Our group we were following up on a loan at the municipal for two years, but we decided to give up because the cost of transportation every day from our homes to the municipal are very high and at the end of the day the amount granted is insufficient example you are granted 2,000,000TZS and you have to split among all women members and at the same time cover costs for the transport you have been using.

- Woman fish processor

- The community development officers do not make field visits to the women groups or when at the landing site; because the visit by officers can provide an opportunity for women to be represented and have their voices heard in community meetings and decision-making processes related to fisheries management and development. Without such representation, women’s perspectives and needs are overlooked, leading to community by laws, policies and interventions that do not adequately address their concerns.

- Poor communication from the community development department, lack of transparency and lack of respect as business women have resulted in women being excluded from important discussions and decision-making processes within their communities and in the sector. When key information is not effectively communicated, or when decision-making processes are opaque, women found it difficult to assert their voices and influence outcomes.

“ You know if you go the offices of Community development officer, first of all they will keep you waiting at times they do not treat you with respect they will speak to you as if you are a child especially when you need assistance with business plan writing. So, this discourages us even to speak out our challenges.

- Woman fish processor

Session 2: Leadership Development

About The Tool

The session applied the visual tool of problem tree method, also known as the “logical framework approach,”. it was used to identify and analyze problems and their causes and effects. The valuable tool was used in facilitating leadership training for women in fisheries that structured discussions and identified key issues that limits the participation of women in leadership roles.

Figure 2. The problem tree visual tool, the roots represent the ‘causes’ the trunk is the identified challenge that is ‘lack of women participation in leadership roles/position’ and the leaves represents the ‘consequences.’



Facilitation by Problem Tree Method

Participants took part in the interactive sessions focused on leadership skills, including effective communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Practical scenarios were used to illustrate leadership challenges and strategies for addressing them.

The following were the identified causes (roots) that limits the participation of women in leadership position/ roles, hindering them in raising their voices.

- Limited access to training and education opportunities, it was informed that this have hindered women fishers from acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge needed to advance into leadership positions. Because women lack proper education and training, hence it reduces the qualifications or confidence required to take on leadership roles.
- Cultural norms and gender stereotypes within fishing communities have prevented women from being viewed as capable leaders. Traditional gender roles and societal expectations have also discouraged women from aspiring to leadership positions and leading to discrimination and bias when they do seek leadership roles. The same was identified in the CTM where men do not allow their wives to take governance positions in the BMUs executive committees.
- Inadequate support networks for women in the industry; Women are facing limited support networks and mentorship opportunities, which are crucial for career development and advancement. Without access to supportive relationships and guidance, they find it difficult to navigate the challenges associated with leadership roles. An example was associated with the lack of field visits from extension officers identified in the CTM.

- Work-life balance challenges; the same challenge was identified in the CTM, where women are responsible for caregiving and domestic duties in their communities. The demanding nature of fishing work makes it difficult for women to take on additional leadership responsibilities.

Consequences/impacts (the leaves)

- limited economic empowerment for women, this is because women will have less access to credit, training, technology, and markets compared to their male counterparts. The lack of women in leadership positions will contribute to a perpetuation of these disparities, as decision-making processes and resource allocation may not take into account the specific needs and perspectives of women fishers.
- reduced decision-making power, when women are underrepresented in leadership positions within the fishing industry and village meetings, their voices and perspectives are not adequately considered in decision-making processes. This results in policies, regulations, and management practices that do not fully address the needs and concerns of women processors. As a result, women will have reduced decision-making power when it comes to issues such as resource management, community development, and market access.
- lack of representation in industry organizations, organizations such as TAWFA, AWFISHNET play a crucial role in advocating for the interests of women processors, shaping policies, and providing access to resources and opportunities. Because women are not well-represented in similar or likeminded organizations, their specific needs and concerns are not effectively addressed. Additionally, the lack of representation can limit women's access to networks, mentorship, and capacity-building opportunities that are often facilitated through such industry organizations.

Figure 3. Application of the tool as members attach the causes at the roots and, reading through the attached causes and effects/consequences as written by attendees.



Developed Solutions

Once the problem tree was created, participants were encouraged to brainstorm potential solutions and interventions that would address the root causes identified, and the following were the proposed action.

- Ongoing mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to resources that will enable women to advance their roles in fisheries governance and leadership.
- Initiatives should be developed to provide women with access to relevant education and training programs, including courses on fisheries management, leadership skills, and business management. These programs should be tailored to the specific needs and constraints of women in the fishing industry.
- Efforts should be made to challenge and change cultural norms and stereotypes through community engagement, awareness campaigns, and advocacy for gender equality. It is important to create an environment where women are encouraged and supported in pursuing leadership roles within the fishing industry.
- Establishing mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and support groups specifically tailored to women in the fishing industry can help address this

issue. These initiatives can provide guidance, advice, and encouragement, as well as create a sense of community and solidarity among women fishers.

- Strengthening the support network for women by forging partnerships with non-governmental organizations such as EMEDO, WORLDFISH and development agencies that have experience in women's empowerment and livelihood improvement. Such collaborative efforts can leverage expertise and resources to support women processors.

Workshop Outcomes

- The workshop received positive feedback from the participants, who expressed increased confidence in their ability to contribute meaningfully to governance and leadership in the fisheries sector.
- Several attendees shared their plans to apply the knowledge and skills gained during the workshop to initiate dialogue with local authorities and participate in community decision-making processes.
- During the training, participants were encouraged to analyze the relationships between the core issue, its causes, and its effects. This helped them in understanding the interconnected nature of the challenges they face as women in fisheries and how addressing root causes can lead to positive outcomes.
- women were able to reflect on their personal strengths so that they could take to contribute in improving governance and leadership within their communities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the workshop was a significant step in empowering women in the fisheries sector, and we are committed to building on this momentum to create lasting positive change for women fish processors and traders.

Workshop Program

Time	Activity	Responsible Person
8.30-9:00	Participants arrival & registration	All
9:00-9:15	Opening & welcoming remarks	EMEDO & WORLD FISH
9:15-9:30	Workshop overview	EMEDO
9:30-10:00	Q&A from participants on workshop overview	All
10:00-10:30	Breakfast	
10:30-11.30	Governance by CTM	EMEDO
11:30-12:00	Discussion based on tool	All
12:00-12:30	Q&A	All
12:30-1:00	Lunch Break	
1:00-1:10	Ice breaker	All
1:10-2:00	Leadership by Problem tree	EMEDO
2:00-2:30	Discussion based on tool	All
2:30-3:00	Q&A	All
3:00-4:30	Way forward /proposed actions	All
4:30-5:00	Closing remarks & Logistics	EMEDO

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The lead initiative is the HER+ Research Initiative. please visit [HER+: Harnessing gender and social equality for resilience in agrifood systems](https://www.cgiar.org/heritage)

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