



Addressing women's invisibility in aquatic food systems, examining  
impact pathways towards gender and social equity

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# Overview

## 1. Rationale for gender and social inclusion research in aquatic food systems (AFS)

## 2. Five pathways to women's empowerment and gender equality: Lessons learned from WorldFish and its partners

- P1. Formulation and implementation of gender equality and socially inclusive policies, through the collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and other social markers, and by building the capacity of research scientists to undertake gender research. Gender research tools include WEFI, the Reach-Benefit-Empower-Transform (RBET) framework, and a selection of participatory approaches, among others.
- P2. Inclusion of and responsiveness to gender, youth and other marginalized groups in innovations (technological, social, financial and institutional) to promote AqFS productivity, nutrition and incomes, and to improve livelihoods.
- P3. Gender equality and socially inclusive governance of land and water commons at different levels, and that considers indigenous and small-scale AqFS actors.
- P4. Promoting resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and other shocks and stresses among vulnerable groups and small-scale producers.
- P5. Addressing underlying structural barriers through GTAs for marginalized groups, such as indigenous people, people with disabilities, youth and children.

## • 3. Tools for gender inclusive and gender-responsive research





# 1. Rationale for gender and social inclusion in AFS

# 1. Rationale for gender and social inclusion research in AFS



- Gender equality and women's empowerment are globally recognized priorities, as enshrined in **Sustainable Development Goal 5**.



- **Fish agri-food systems are intersected by macro- and micro-patterns** of social and gender inequalities and inequities (Rajaratnam et al. 2020).



- **Invisibility of women in the aquatic food system (AFS):** Women participate in all parts of fish food systems, but are most pronounced in post-harvest processing and trade of fish.



- **AFS are vital for global food and nutrition security** and provide important source of economic livelihoods for women and other marginalized individuals across the globe.



- **Women experience a high degree of socioeconomic marginalization**, poverty before even climate change and COVID-19 and thus require specific attention in COVID-19 responses and climate change to avoid responses worsening inequities (UN 2020).





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# P1. Policy formulation and data

- **Objective:** to generate the missing quantitative and qualitative data that is needed to better identify women's AqFS roles, responsibilities, knowledge and benefits, and identify marginalized people and their roles and benefits more effectively.

- What is needed?

This requires identifying and prioritizing the data need in relation to their potential to contribute to women's empowerment and to GESI. Key thematic priorities are AqFS contribution to productivity, nutrition, incomes and livelihoods.

The data obtained is expected, at a minimum, to contribute to the creation of effective gender-accommodative interventions. Premium will be put on gender transformative approaches.

The need to collect robust and sex-and-gender-disaggregated data, Good focus on intersectional identities.

**Example of solution:** Gender analysis in 17 countries anchored in the Illuminating Hidden Harvests initiative, uncovered "sexist data structures."





P2. Inclusion of and responsiveness to gender, youth and other marginalized groups in innovations (technological, social, financial and institutional) to promote AqFS productivity, nutrition and incomes, and to improve livelihoods.



P2. Innovations in order to promote AqFS productivity, nutrition and incomes, and to improve livelihoods.

- **Objective:** To use the data generated from P1 to ensure that AqFS innovations (technological, social, financial and institutional) are inclusive and responsive to women and other marginalized groups. The overall aim is to empower women, young women and men and marginalized people to benefit from the improved productivity, nutrition, incomes and better livelihoods that AqFS innovations are projected to provide. This pathway has two elements: technology adoption and value chain development.
- Effective technology adoption, and adaptation by users as necessary, involves three phrases: awareness, tryout, and continued adoption (Theis et al., 2018).
- This pathway will strengthen the ability of users to benefit from innovations by assessing the level of their access to resources they need (including such as internet access, land quality, type of fishing area or pond) they need for effective participation.



## Examples of innovations for Pathway 2

- **Innovation 1:** Gender inclusive financing and post-harvest technology accessing in Malawi.
- **Intervention:** In Malawi women and men fish processors were introduced to solar tent dryers, improved smoking kilns, etc. Connected with a bank-provided lower interest rates to be paid by women than by men (Nagoli et al., 2020).
  
- **Innovation 2:** Closing the digital divide using information communication technology (ICT) can synergistically help close the finance divide.
- **Outcome:** In fishing communities in coastal Bangladesh, action research found that ICT allows women to work, train and receive payments from home, providing a “work around” to gendered mobility constraints (Choudhury and Tanzina 2020).





## Innovation 3: Training women fishers

- Trained 400 fishers (50% women) in Cox's Bazar for sea weed farming .
- Trained 200 green mussel farmers (50% women) in CXB.
- Trained 1,000 fishers women in CXB & Bhola to make safe dried fish, fish powder & chutney from anchovy & sardine.
- Market linkages & entrepreneurship development.







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- **Objective:** Greater awareness of, and focus on, how gendered power dynamics affect access, rights, and governance are needed to better understand the roles of women and men and to develop equitable solutions in the face of change.
- To ensure sustainability, the Aquatic Foods Initiative will invest in embedding innovations within the systems, strategies and practices of government, non-governmental and private-sector partners who have the mandate and capacity to deliver at scale, and sustain delivery of services over time (Woltering et al. 2019).
- Working with government ministries, departments and agencies involved in fisheries, women, gender and health, as well as non-governmental organizations, and international or regional producer and trader representatives (such as AWFishNET and the Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Network), private-sector partners in aquaculture and fisheries sectors to out-scale and up-scale AqFS innovations, technologies and methodologies.



### P3. Gender equality and socially inclusive governance of land and water commons at different levels, and that considers indigenous and small-scale AqFS actors.

- **Example:** Empowering women as leaders in households, communities and businesses in Cambodia

**Intervention:** Activities to empower women as leaders in the community and economically in the household, and as entrepreneurs.

**Outcome:** Women increased their economic and/or leadership activity, and the committees and Communities also benefitted from women's leadership through increased levels of fundraising and more comprehensive management planning.





P4. Promoting resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and other shocks and stresses among vulnerable groups and small-scale producers.



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**Objective:** To work at the individual, household, and community level, interventions to support adaptive capacity can be considered and strengthened across five domains:

(i) assets (e.g., fishing gear, credit, and savings);

(ii) flexibility (e.g., alternative livelihood opportunities, switching between fishing gears and species);

(iii) organization (e.g., social networks, collaboration with diversity of partners);

(iv) learning; and

(v) agency (Wabnitz et al., 2021). Ensuring that no one is left behind requires the use of inclusive approaches which consider diverse knowledge systems, interests, and priorities, especially of those who are marginalized (Wabnitz et al., 2021, :32).

- Explore better social protection mechanisms or systems that might work for various localities.

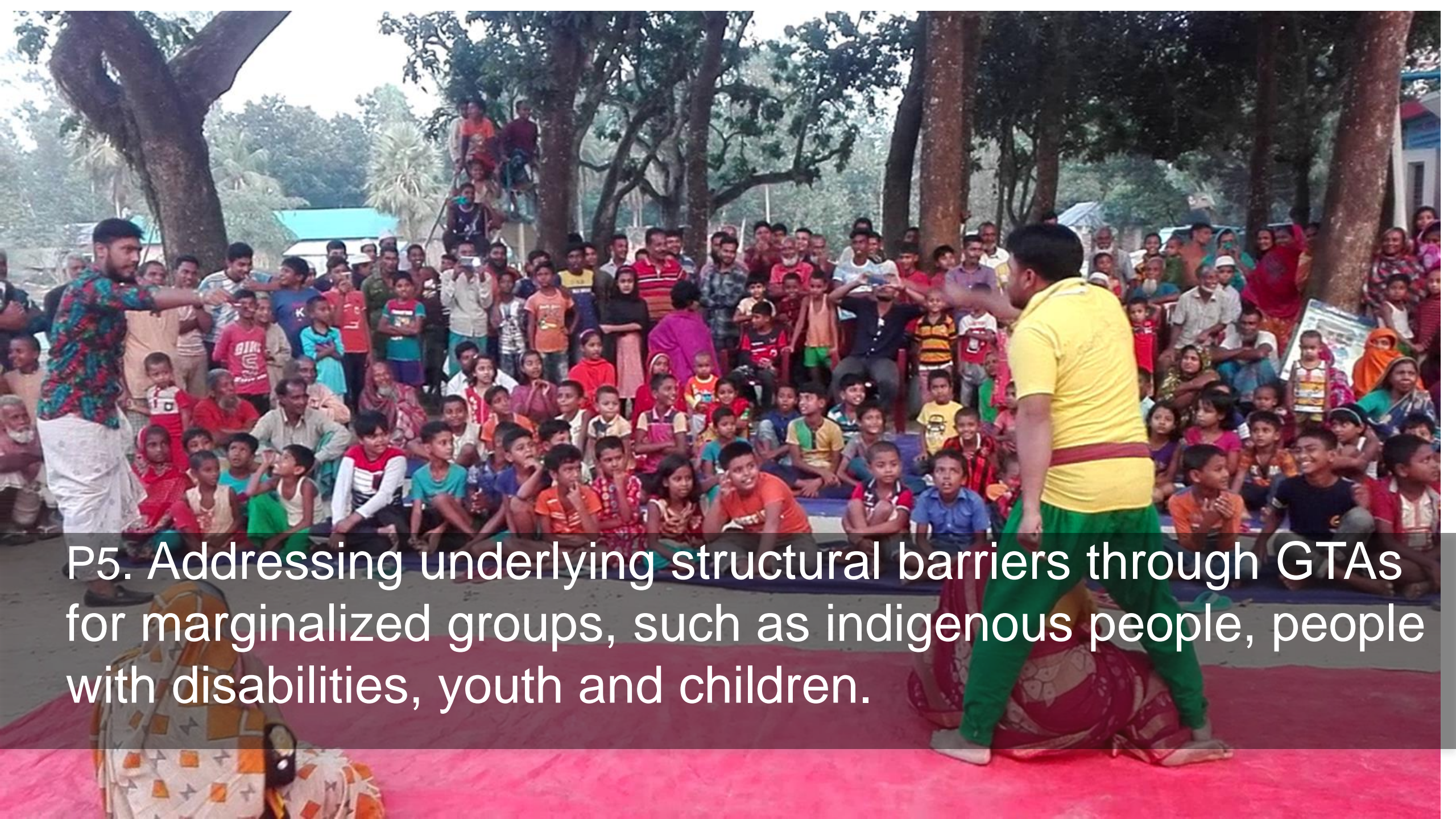
## Examples of innovation for pathway 4

Innovation: Providing climate information services (CIS) to farmers in response to climate risks.



Examples of some limitations: In Bangladesh women participation in CIS is low and they are engaged in secondary fish-farming activities and are restricted in decision making roles.





P5. Addressing underlying structural barriers through GTAs for marginalized groups, such as indigenous people, people with disabilities, youth and children.



## P5. Addressing underlying structural barriers through GTAs

- **Objective:** GTA seek to challenge gender inequality by transforming harmful gender norms, roles and relations, while working towards redistributing power, resources, and services more equally.
- **Innovation:** Gender Transformative Approaches in savings groups scaled across eight (8) countries in Africa and 1 in Central America.
- **Contribution made:** The Catholic Relief Services development agency continued to scale the GTA-integrated savings groups approach that WorldFish piloted in Zambia in 2015. Since then, CRS has scaled up the combined approach to 9 countries: Benin, Central African Republic, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and one in Guatemala.







### 3. Tools for gender inclusive and gender-responsive research



# Tools for gender inclusive and gender-responsive research

## 1. Gender inclusive and gender-responsive innovations

- Ten strategies for research quality in distance research during COVID-19 and future food system shock (McDougall et al. 2020). <https://digitalarchive.worldfishcenter.org/handle/20.500.12348/4382>
- Tool Navigator: Using market-based research methods for user-responsive innovation. <https://www.slideshare.net/worldfishcenter/worldfish-tool-navigator-for-market-based-research-2018>
- Gender integration in research: A guide for the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (McDougall, et al. 2021).

## 2. Inclusive livelihoods and wealth generation

- Conceptual framework for gendered aquaculture value chain analysis and development (Danielsen et al. in press).
- Identifying niches for women's entrepreneurship in aquatic food chains: A methods package (BoP Innovation Center and FISH, 2021). <https://www.slideshare.net/worldfishcenter/identifying-niches-for-womens-entrepreneurship-in-aquatic-food-chains-a-methods-package>
- Exploring women's empowerment in fisheries: A methods pack for a collaborative study on women's empowerment in small-scale fisheries (Drucza et al. in press).

## 3. Inclusive governance

- Gender-inclusive facilitation for community-based marine resource management (Kleiber et al. 2019).
- Rights, equity and justice: A diagnostic for social meta-norm diffusion in environmental governance (Lawless et al. 2020).

## 4. Gender-transformative approaches to address underlying structural barriers

- The SILC+GTA facilitation manual: The savings and internal leading communities plus gender transformative approach (Promundo-US and WorldFish 2016).
- Promoting gender transformative change with men and boys: A manual to spark critical reflection on harmful gender norms with men and boys in aquatic agricultural systems (Promundo-US and AAS 2016).
- Women's Empowerment in Fisheries and Aquaculture Index (WEFI).
- Gender transformative approaches for advancing gender equality in coral reef social-ecological systems (Lau et al. 2021)



# Thank You

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