

**THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S FISH ORGANIZATIONS IN CONTRIBUTING TO
SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES: AWFISHNET AS A CASE STUDY
FROM AFRICA**

Lovin Kobusingye^{1*}, Elizabeth Nyboer², Maurice Ssebisubi¹, Hellen Moepi Guebama³,
Beyene Ateba Née Baliaba¹, Editrudith Lukanga¹ and Gee Jennifer⁴

¹African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFishNet), Kenindia Business
Park, Museum Hill, Westlands Road, Nairobi, Kenya

²Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation, Virginia Tech, 100 Cheatham Hall,
Blacksburg, VA 24061, USA

³African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), Kenindia Business
Park, Museum Hill, Westlands Road, Nairobi, Kenya

⁴Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Equitable Livelihoods Team,
Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy

*lovien2001@yahoo.com

Despite their essential contributions to livelihoods, food security, and climate resilience, women's roles in African small-scale fisheries are often marginalized in policy, research, and development initiatives. This marginalization limits progress toward sustainable fisheries management and equitable resource access. Women's fisheries organizations, such as the African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network (AWFishNet), address these challenges by amplifying women's voices, fostering collective action, and advocating for inclusive governance in small-scale fisheries.

We examine AWFishNet as a case study, highlighting its role in strengthening women's influence and participation in fisheries governance across Africa. AWFishNet members have developed technical and leadership skills, expanded access to local and regional markets, engaged in national and regional policy dialogues, and established cross-border networks. These efforts have reduced power imbalances by improving women's access to finance and strengthening their roles in decision-making processes, such as community-based fisheries resources management.

Through showcasing AWFishNet's achievements, our case study demonstrates the transformative potential of women's fisheries networks to foster gender-equitable and climate-resilient small-scale fisheries. It offers practical strategies for policymakers, practitioners, and funders, including integrating women's networks into national fisheries policies and funding gender-responsive adaptation programs.

These approaches can enhance sustainable fisheries management and support equitable climate adaptation across Africa.