

NURTURING BEHAVIOR CHANGE FOR INCLUSIVE BLUE ECONOMY: A CASE STUDY FROM A WOMEN'S COASTAL COMMUNITY IN BONE, INDONESIA

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This study explores how business and sustainable fisheries training, along with capital support, influence the economic independence of 14 Bugis coastal women in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi. Framed within a behavior change communication (BCC) approach, the initiative focused on training sessions and the provision of production capital to support the adaptive use of local marine resources. Traditionally, these women were expected to stay at home to manage household tasks and care for children, while their husbands spent up to three weeks at sea. Household labor is heavily gendered and economic participation was rare and discouraged. However, following the intervention, the women transitioned from having no personal income to independently managing a micro-scale fish processing business utilizing bycatches and *tetelan*—the remaining cuts of yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) that cannot be sold by their husbands for export. Using a qualitative method, the research draws on in-depth interviews and basic household revenue data to assess changes post-intervention. Results show that the 14 participants now co-manage a micro-business generating an average annual revenue of USD 2,452 since 2023. Beyond financial literacy and entrepreneurship, many women expressed a newfound sense of purpose and emotional well-being, derived from engaging in meaningful work and peer networks. While domestic expectations persist, the women now have greater autonomy. Notably, several husbands—having witnessed the benefits of their wives' participation—have become more supportive of their daughters' education, allowing them to pursue university studies, a significant departure from previous norms of early marriage.