

Measuring Gender Justice in Aquaculture and Fisheries: Tools & Lessons from Practice

Purpose: Through the individual cases, and dialogue across them, we aim to probe the following three questions:

i) Tools: What do we *do* in the field and at our desks? The first panel question concerns the methods and metrics we use to assess gender equality and social inclusion in the context of aquaculture and fisheries research. Literature on gender monitoring suggests that frameworks should identify gender differences in perceptions, attitudes, opportunities, and access to resources and decision-making (see e.g., Kusakabe, 2012; McDougall et al., 2021). We should further assess how aquaculture and fisheries projects themselves can influence gender relations and social understandings of gender (Kusakabe, 2012). But what do researchers *do* in and out of the “field” to assess these changes? What methods and indicators can help us understand the gendered dimensions of aquatic food systems and NbS? How do we monitor less tangible and longer-term processes like “empowerment”? How have you had to modify your “desk-based” plans to adapt to realities in the field?

ii) Evidence: What do we *see* or need to see to indicate changing gender relations? The second set of questions concerns what we *see* – or feel/experience -- in our engagements with research participants. We consider the types of “evidence” that indicate changes in gender relations in diverse aquatic food systems. Gender is context-specific and co-constituted with other identities like race, ethnicity, and class. Panelists will consider the important gender and intersectional relations in the context of their own work. Some questions we might consider include: What are the most important gender relations and axes of oppression within the aquatic food systems we work in? What have we seen or what would we and our research participants like to see as evidence of changing gender relations? How do we address differences in our own understandings of gender relations versus those of participants? What types of data do we need to collect? Which analytical frameworks have we found useful for making sense of our data? How do we balance rich contextual detail with the need to compare across cases, or make data relevant to actors beyond academia like policymakers or donors?

iii) Learning: What have we *learned* and what challenges do we face in our work? Research and monitoring are also political rather than technical processes—when we make decisions about what to measure it has real world implications. We are ourselves also part of the intersectional gender relations we study. This requires us to be reflexive and flexible enough to capture unexpected outcomes or dynamics and *learn* and adjust accordingly (Kusakabe, 2012, p. 38). We conclude by inviting panelists and participants to consider the methodological challenges they face as they encounter messy realities “on the ground.” What lessons have panelists learned in the context of their research? What challenges or surprises are session participants encountering, and how might we work through them?

Format: In this practice-focused panel, we consider methods and tools for assessing gender and other intersecting power relations and transformations towards “gender justice.” We learn from

four projects seeking to advance gender justice through nature-based solutions (NbS) in aquaculture. The cases are part of the [Nature-based Climate Solutions in Aquaculture Food Systems in Asia-Pacific \(AQUADAPT\)](#) initiative, co-funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Government of Canada.

The panel is structured around what we *do* as researchers, what we *see* in the field, and how we can *learn* from researching diverse gendered realities.

- **Case study presentations (50 minutes):** Each panelist will present for **10-12 minutes** on a concrete case study of gender or intersectional analysis in an ongoing aquaculture action research project, including a specific method/methodology (or methods/methodologies), early findings, and challenges.
- **Drawing connections (10 minutes):** A discussant will then reflect on similarities, differences, and lessons across the projects and may ask the participants questions.
- **Workshopping and troubleshooting in our own work (30 minutes):** Open Q&A will provide an opportunity to workshop the cases, and for participants to reflect on methodological challenges they are encountering when integrating gender and intersectional analyses in their own aquaculture and fisheries work.