

Exploring and expanding understandings of gender identity and expression in fisheries

Purpose: LGBTQIA+ individuals in fisheries-dependent communities face compounded marginalization due to entrenched patriarchal norms and economic dependencies. Social visibility and activism often result in scapegoating, limiting advocacy efforts. This side event will leverage the GAF platform to highlight community-based resilience strategies and foster partnerships for more inclusive fisheries governance.

This event calls attention to the unique challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ populations in fisheries and aquaculture and identifies civil society organizations and other stakeholders actively working on inclusive practices within these sectors with the aim of building a multidisciplinary community of practice around these urgent issues.

The session aims to:

- Raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ populations in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Highlight the work of civil society organizations and other stakeholders to promote inclusive practices in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Encourage reflection amongst gender practitioners about how to integrate LGBTQIA+ advocacy into their work.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration between stakeholder groups to foster a more inclusive, equitable sector.

Moderator: Ms. Jennifer Gee (FAO)

Format: The special session will be hosted as a roundtable discussion featuring civil society organizations, case study presentations on successful initiatives, and an interactive session to identify priority areas for collaboration and action.

This roundtable will provide an open and inclusive space to explore how LGBTQIA+ rights, representation, and empowerment intersect with the pursuit of gender justice in fisheries and aquaculture. Through short case presentations, moderated dialogue, video contributions and interactive group reflection, the session will highlight innovative grassroots initiatives, confront persistent challenges, and identify actionable pathways toward more inclusive policy, practice, and partnership.

a. Welcome & Framing by Moderators (5 minutes)

Overview of the session goals and format and framing the importance of LGBTQIA+ inclusion as part of a **gender-transformative agenda** in aquatic food systems.

b. Case Spotlights: Stories of LGBTQIA+ Empowerment (20 minutes)

Moderators and panelists will briefly share success stories or advocacy initiatives that have supported LGBTQIA+ individuals in fisheries/aquaculture contexts and will make use of video contributions to share voices and experiences embedding different gender identities and expressions in the fisheries sector.

c. Moderated Roundtable Dialogue: Removing Barriers, Building Belonging (25 minutes)

Moderator-led discussion with 4 expert panelists, as well as open interventions the

audience, exploring deeper insights around:

- Barriers facing LGBTQIA+ individuals in fisheries/aquaculture
- Intersectional approaches and inclusive policy frameworks
- Opportunities for cross-sector collaboration
- Roles of institutions, funders, and grassroots movements

This portion is structured as a **conversational exchange**, not a formal Q&A.

d. Fostering collaboration and action (30 minutes)

A general discussion with the audience where participants, panelists and moderator will reflect on key themes and action points to stimulate synergies according to the following guiding questions:

1. How can we adapt or adopt some of the strategies discussed?
2. What are the common points of action where we can ground collaboration and stimulate funding?
3. What practical steps can we take to support LGBTQIA+ inclusion in our institutions, networks, and advocacy?

Panellists:

- Dr Christina Kenny (UNE)
- Dr Carmen Pedroza Gutiérrez (UNAM)
- Dr. Malasri Khumsri (Thailand DoF)
- Ms. Jariya Sornkliang (SEAFDEC)

Contributors (with short bios):

Dr Christina Kenny (UNE) (she/her) is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of New England, Australia, and lives and works on Anaiwan country in NSW. She works on issues of gender, human rights and development with a focus on colonial histories, gendered citizenship, and gender and sexuality rights in the Global South, and Kenya in particular. Her current work focuses on the experiences of people of diverse sexuality, gender identity and/or expression working in fisheries value chains in Samoa and India. Christina has also worked with a variety of human rights-based organisations in research, policy development and advocacy in Australia and sub-Saharan Africa including the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Women's Legal Centre (Cape Town) and the Kenya Human Rights Commission in Nairobi, to name a few.

Dr. Carmen Pedroza Gutiérrez (UNAM) is a Senior Researcher at the National School of Higher Education (ENES), Mérida Unit, of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). She holds a PhD in *Socioéconomie du développement* from the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS) in Paris, and two Master's degrees: one in International Relations from the University of Sussex, and another in Development Studies from the University of East Anglia, both in the United Kingdom. Her research focuses on gender in fisheries, particularly women's roles in fisheries activities, organizational dynamics in seafood trade, social networks, and supply systems in small-scale fisheries. She has authored more than 40 publications and has received international recognition through awards such as the Yamamoto Prize, the Rosemary Firth Award, and the Women in Seafood Video Competition.

Ms. Jennifer Gee (FAO) is a Fishery Officer at FAO, leading gender work in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division. With two decades of experience, she specializes in embedding gender equality in aquatic food systems, socio-economic data collection, and inclusive policy development. Her interdisciplinary background in environmental studies informs her work to empower women, promote equitable governance, and recognize the value of gender-responsive approaches in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

Dr. Malasri Khumsri (Thailand DoF) is an Aquaculture Technology Specialist in the Inland Aquaculture Research and Development Division, Department of Fisheries (Thailand). She holds a PhD and Master's degree in Aquaculture and Aquatic Resource Management at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and has more than 28 years of working experiences with the Department of Fisheries, with about 5 years working as the Fisheries Management Specialist for the Fisheries Programme of the Mekong River Commission (MRC). She has working experience in the fields of inland aquaculture, aquaculture technology, as well as innovation, gender in fisheries, and community-based fisheries management.

Ms. Jariya Sornkliang (SEAFDEC) is a Fisheries Management Scientist at the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), where she has served since 2004. With an academic background in Environmental and Resources Management, she has developed strong expertise in fisheries and coastal resource management. Throughout her career, Jariya has focused on small-scale fisheries, socio-economic analysis, and community-based management, while increasingly emphasizing gender equality and social inclusion in the sector. As SEAFDEC's Gender Focal Person, she plays a key role in promoting gender mainstreaming, empowering women in fishing communities, and documenting women's contributions to ensure their roles are recognized and valued.