A CONVERSATION WITH WOMEN BEGINNING THEIR CAREERS IN AQUACULTURE AND ALLIED FIELDS

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What do we know about women in aquaculture, beyond our personal experiences?

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*Mainstreaming Gender in Fisheries and Aquaculture: From Recognition to Reality*
THE STATE OF WOMEN IN AQUACULTURE

UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

UN and 23+ international organizations agreed to the Millennium Development Goals, including gender quality and empowering women

UN Economic and Social Council adopted gender mainstreaming for advancement of women and equality

Despite this, women tend to marginalized in a variety of ways...the issue at hand is how to ensure genuine and active mainstreaming of gender and the many facets of gender considerations in the fisheries and aquaculture sector

FAO. 2012. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture. fao.org
THE STATE OF WOMEN IN AQUACULTURE

While reliable estimates are not available...women are probably more involved in aquaculture than in fisheries

FAO. 2012. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture. fao.org
In Belize, most processors are women from rural communities where unemployment levels are high and poverty is greatest.

In Bangladesh, women’s NGOs and other entrepreneurs have encouraged women to participate in aquaculture.

In Cuba, female workers constitute 27% of the aquaculture workforce.
In Estonia, the gender ratio of the aquaculture workforce is 1:1.

In Israel, in some sectors, women make up ~95% of the highly skilled workforce.

In Sri Lanka, women constitute 5% of the workforce in shrimp aquaculture, but 30% of those engaged in ornamental fish production.
In Malaysia, ~10% of the aquaculture workforce are women, primarily involved in freshwater aquaculture and hatchery operation.

In Jamaica, ~8-11% of fish farms are owned/operated by women and women dominate the processing workforce.

In Panama, 80% of the workforce in processing plants are women.
There are vital differences in the power positions of men and women in fisheries and aquaculture.

- Less control over the value chain
- Activities are less profitable
- Access only to lower quality fish
- Exclusion from the most profitable markets and highly paid positions
- Bigger losers from increasing market globalization

FAO. 2012. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture. fao.org
FACTORS WEAKENING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION

Lower literacy and education levels

Time burdens

Mobility constraints

Participation in weaker organizations

Less leadership experience
THE CONFIDENCE GAP

Men apply for a job when they meet only 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% of them.

American women earn only 80-95% of what men earn

More women work part-time

More women leave the workforce for family care

Women tend to favor “family friendly” industries, occupations, and workplaces

CONSAD for the DOL. 2009. An analysis of the reasons for the disparity in wages between men and women.
THE WAGE GAP

Differences in earnings between men and women in the shrimp value chain in Bangladesh

Development & Training Services for USAID. 2006. A pro-poor analysis of the shrimp sector in Bangladesh. usaid.org
Women appear less willing to negotiate than men, particularly early in their career.

GETTING AHEAD

Career advancement strategies yield different results for men and women

Making achievements known and gaining access to powerful others are most effective for women

Keeping options open and changing jobs helps men, but hurts women

Carter, N.M., & C. Silva. 2011. The myth of the ideal worker: does doing all the right things really get women ahead?
Evidence suggests that women don’t look out for each other in the workplace.

60% of bullies are men, but female bullies target women more than 70% of the time.

Women don’t have to be each others allies by default, but they shouldn’t be enemies either.

Workplace Bullying Institute. 2009. Woman-on-woman bullying. workplacebullying.org
RECOGNIZE THAT PEOPLE MIGHT NOT GET IT

Communicating what you do, why it’s important, and why you value your career strengthens your personal and professional support networks.

Friends, family, and colleagues who understand what you do are more likely to support what you do and help you succeed at it.
We All Can Do It!

Feminism is worthless without intersectionality and inclusion.